

W. H. DODGE

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JOHN A. SEAVERNS

HUNTING RECOLLECTIONS.

PART II.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHORESS,

MISS TAWKE,

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MISS TAWKE.

Augusta Summey Tawke

P R E F A C E .

Who amongst us does not know the trials attending the beginning of a fresh season. The first time you ride after months of rest is a species of torture unknown to the general public. As a rule, the boots which were so comfortable at the end of the season have been put in thorough repair. They are so hard and stiff you can scarcely draw them on, and when you endeavour to walk downstairs, you feel like a cat in walnut shells. The day is in all probability broiling hot. You cannot even think of your usual attire except with abject horror, and you array yourself (I now have especially women in my mind) in kind of nondescript garments, starting with a straw hat with an elastic which has received no attention during the interregnum and looks all right but is useless. You have forgotten how to arrange your tie with that exactitude for which you were famed, having taken twice your usual time to dress you are ready to start —on a mountain of flesh, something like a badly drawn cow. How different to the animal when you dismounted after the last day of the season—all spring and muscle, treading as though going on air—a trifle full, perhaps.

The mountain moves off with shoes which have only recently been put on, and you know at once your horse feels very much the same as yourself in well repaired boots. The horse itself is a mixture of sloth and spirits—very unpleasant to the rider, and add to this the fact the flies are biting sharp (which gives one hope of much needed rain) the discomfort of that first ride is complete. Most likely your stable department, in the absence of any particular amount of work, have spent their leisure moments in polishing your saddle, which gives you the feeling of sitting on ice, and when the turn for spirits seizes your animal, how you wish the stable department had refrained from spending their extra time over the saddle.

The foregoing exactly describes my feelings on my second volume. I look forward, however, to a very pleasant time in giving the details of the seasons during Mr. Carnegie's Mastership. The scent will be good, and the difficulties, thanks to the vast amount of information provided by my good friends, are not so heavy.

PEOPLE WHO HUNT.

First, there is the man who from his youth upwards seems to know by instinct the exact place to be in and how to get there in the shortest possible way with the least trouble and fatigue to his horse. This knowledge seems to run in families, and I have known it to descend two generations.

Next is the man who is always in difficulties. Either he has lost a shoe or his stirrup leather breaks, or he gets into a ditch. This type of sportsman is not in the least afraid to ride, but somehow he never can take the right turning.

Then there is the man who lives for hunting. During the night previous he spends half his time jumping in and out of bed, and with his head out of window seeing what sort of a night it is and the chances of scent for the morrow; and when he arrives at the Meet he becomes so wildly excited and does not know what he is saying, yet when he is not hunting and in a calmer state of mind he is a most polished gentleman.

Then there are the soldiers from a neighbouring garrison. Their horses are perfection, and their get-up just what it should be. Many of them go well—wonderfully well. But they

give one the feeling of riding in a steeplechase. At the end of the day they are discussing which man's horse was first over certain obstacles, and the rest of the field of *natives* are as nothing to them. I never felt this more strongly than I did one day when I was out with the Woolwich drag. The hairbreadth escapes of that day will never be obliterated from my memory. The run was lovely if one could have enjoyed it alone, but the feeling of horses' breath on your face at each fence was a nightmare. Well, to go back to the hunting people. There is the man who has good horses—but one never has a chance of knowing if they are any use for the simple reason that he never rides at all.

Next come the doctors, don't they just go when hounds run, riding screws of horses, but such jumpers. I have in my mind one man in particular, he had the advantage of having a knacker for his neighbour, and many a horse after being condemned has carried him to the front for several seasons. £10 was a very long price for him to give.

When, years ago, I used to drive with my father to the Meet, we always looked out for the doctor in his surgery, examining patients' tongues, wearing his hunting boots ready to start. How the mighty have fallen. The doctor rides no more and visits his patients in a motor car.

Perhaps I should have put the ladies first. May I say it, they generally are first in a run. To-day we have some sixty fair ones, riding well up in front on superb hunters that never put a

foot wrong. It is a treat to see our leading lady pop over a gate or stile. She has the most perfect seat and hands of any woman I ever came across. Of course they are not all like her. Some do not know how to dress even now. How well I remember a young woman who used to come out in ear-rings and other adornments—face powdered to match—poor thing. What a terrible plight she was in when her horse took it into its head to lie down as we were going through a washway which was flooded. When she was eventually fished up she was a spectacle. Then there was the farmer's daughter, much to be commended, who saw a good deal of the fun on a steady old cob, but, poor girl, so inspired was she by her ardour of the chase, that after a season or two she appeared on a weedy thoroughbred. She was not so happy, and disaster soon befel her. She was crossing a greasy bridge when her horse slipped and down she came. The poor girl broke her leg, was carried to the Rectory near by, where she remained for ten weeks, and, sad to relate, that ended her hunting days.

Then there is the quiet one, never putting herself forward or in the way, but always calm and collected. Quite the reverse of the lady who came to hunt two seasons. She *could* go and no mistake; but her language was a trifle warm. One day someone called out to her to mind the drop in front of her. “*Damn the drop,*” she said.

I must not forget the wit of the Hunt. What Hunt is without him. Always prepared

with jest—never a hard man, but with a wonderful knowledge of the game, and generally accompanied by a bevy of the fair sex who do not want to ride right up in front and know that our wit is a safe man to follow.

Last, but not least, are the farmers, who will always find the warmest corner in my heart. I suppose because I belong to the land, I make it a point always to go through a gate at the same time as a farmer. Don't they throw it open with a swing? I am always nervous of gates. Ever since the time when a man "not-of-the-land" let the gate swing to under my horse—it was down hill—and I was in the very disagreeable position of having half my horse on one side and half on the other, and there I had to wait until she wriggled her hind legs over. Fortunately she was not an excitable animal.

How the farmers know the run of the foxes and just where to go. Many a good run have I got into through watching which way a certain man went.

I must not forget my fellow worker in this district. When hounds meet in our country he takes command and directs matters, and he does it well. He helps me in a thousand ways, and gets through many a job I cannot tackle.

I must not omit to mention the man who rides round last of all and is supposed to shut all gates, and the day following goes over the line to note what damage we have done.

I must say how obliging and civil the second horsemen are. Always ready to lend a



THE END OF A RUN, the account of which is given on PAGE 10, Vol. I.

helping hand or to tell one which way the hounds have gone.

I think I have finished with the field. We one and all discuss the huntsman; and I am sure there is not one person who does not think in his heart how much better he could do the job himself, and what a mess he would make of it if he only had the chance. Then again we are all inclined to offer the Huntsman advice.

BY A LOCAL SPORTSMAN.

May all good sportsmen use their endeavour,
Hounds, horses and foxes in plenty be found,
And fox hunting flourish for ever.

ESSEX UNION FOXHOUNDS.

(Taken from *The Field*).

January 4th, 1879.

On Wednesday these Hounds opened the New Year very hopefully. The fixture was at Rayleigh, one of the highest and most charmingly situated of Essex villages. Animated by a desire to make the most of open weather, or perhaps influenced by forebodings of coming storms, as conveyed through the excessive disturbances of barometrical records, the men and women of the south came in unusual numbers to swell the gathering in the quiet High Street; and all were evidently bent on enjoying such sport as might be offered to the utmost. Of the bitch pack which the Master had out this

day he may well be proud, for it is strengthened by some of the best of the Hertfordshire Merryman blood, which has done so much good to the Bramham Moor and other kennels. The little ladies were trotted quickly off to the Hockley Woods—two miles distant—which have a sinister fame as possessing the deepest and dirtiest rides in England. There is no fear, however, of their recesses being drawn blank; the hounds, in fact, found immediately and, aided by an unexpectedly good scent, stuck to their fox so persistently that they never gave him a hope of escape. For a long time he kept to the woodland, being frequently balked of his attempts to break; but at length forced to fly, he was so quickly pressed across the open that they broke his heart, and, at the end of forty minutes from the find, ran into him in the middle of Mr. Baker's turnip field. The forty minutes of hunting and racing, however, were good for hounds and enjoyable to pursuers. Two or three small coverts were then drawn blank, and the Master, turning to the right, just "looked into" Potash Wood, where, however, Reynard was not at home. The chimneys of "The Lawn," where Mr. and Mrs. Tawke are always ready to offer the hospitality of an open house to their hunting friends, were smokeless, as the owner is at present sojourning by southern seas. The M.F.H. always likes to force his foxes towards Rochford Lawn about lunch time; not unfrequently the field comes to a long check at these doors; and there is seldom an unseemly haste to make a cast forward

before the dining room covers have been well tried.

Coming back to the big woods, the hounds soon got on another of the right sort, and hunted him, fast and slow, for a couple of hours, until dusk compelled the Master reluctantly to whip off. The scent, however, had been getting worse, as heavy rain began to fall, and there was little chance of pressing a stout fox then. Among the many out were Major and Mrs. Goodeve, several Artillery officers from Shoebury, Messrs. F. A. and C. A. Tabor, Mr. S. Baker and his brother, and that very keen old sportsman, Mr. Kemble. On Thursday, when we had looked forward to meeting the hounds at a favourite trysting place, Hazeleigh Hall, in the midst of a capital country, snow began to fall heavily, and about the time that one should have been drawing on his "leathers and tops" there were some six or eight inches of snow over all the land round about Chelmsford.

SPORT IN SOUTH ESSEX.

January, 1880.

"Knee-deep in mud" was a condition of things that always delighted a Brocklesby huntsman of old, and his brethren in many a quarter where ploughed lands prevail would assuredly welcome it as an essential element of good sport. Then, and only in such places, a scent lies well; hounds can run with heads up and sterns down; and, most material point of

all, there is no fear that even the hardest riders will press them over the line, for the stoutest steeds will have enough to do to hold their own in a quick thing when their hoofs sink deep at every stride into stiff clay holding turf. In South Essex they say it has never been wet enough yet. Speaking from one's own experience of days when the pleasures of a run have been followed by the discomfort of having a jog slowly over hills swept by storms of wind and torrents of rain, and to pull into a walk on hard roads out of consideration for feet from which shoes have been wrenched, and, judging from the stains which Essex clay leaves on those who have fathomed the depths of ditches for which that country is famous, my opinion would hardly be at one with those of the natives on this point. The delight of a Master of hounds or his huntsman when he sees his darlings steaming over wet fallows far ahead of the foremost horseman is natural enough, but riders left wearily toiling in rear can hardly be expected to participate fully in this enthusiasm. One does not, however, feel inclined to grumble at anything that permits of hunting, after having been deprived of its pleasures by many weeks of frost; and I must freely confess that the Essex Union country, under any circumstances, presents attractions for me that would counterbalance many more serious drawbacks than have ever fallen to my lot there. Leicestershire men would, as a matter of course, despise it as slow and uninteresting. If pace were the only thing for which a man hunted, all of us might agree

with those fastidious sportsmen; but when hounds do run across the Essex fields, the veriest glutton may find enough of fencing to gratify his desires; and if he ride straight, and get to the end of a good run without a downfall, he may plume himself on having achieved a feat which makes no small demand on the cleverness of a hunter and the judgment of a horseman. Frequently you may see strangers going well there during the first burst, holding the lead perhaps for a mile or two, and keeping well with the hounds; for the fences, though big and treacherous, are such as a fresh hunter should safely negotiate. But look for them at the end of twenty minutes of hard going, when many a ploughed field has been crossed, and you will probably find them emerging from a ditch where the over-taxed powers of their steed failed at last, or stuck fast in the midst of acres of ridge and furrow, across which they had tried to bucket their horse too recklessly. A man, wherever he hunts, should, it is true, learn a lesson which might save him from such disaster; but, unfortunately, he never learns it completely until he has made acquaintance with the deep furrows ploughed by steam cultivators in heavy clay. Apart from the chagrin of being thrown out, however, no one need feel humiliated at a reverse of this kind. The foremost riders of South Essex are ever ready to welcome a good man who can keep company through a long run or a quick one; but they are never prone to glory at the discomfiture of one who has made a gallant effort, and failed in its fulfil-

ment. Master, field and farmers are ever ready to welcome a stranger, who shows that he can share their sport with a true sportsman's pleasure. Sometimes, unfortunately, this hospitable feeling is abused by people who construe the liberty and equality of the hunting field as meaning free and equal right to damage the crops and fences of those over whose land they are permitted to ride, for which offence they would never dream of offering either apology or reparation. It was either with the Essex Union or a neighbouring hunt that one gentleman, having pursued his pleasure for a very considerable period without cost to himself, took it as a great offence that he should be asked for a subscription at last, replying, "I do not see what I am to subscribe for; I do not put the hounds to any expense." The Saturday's fixtures of the Essex Union are especially favoured by gentlemen of this order, who take advantage of the fact that the place of meeting on that day is fixed for the convenience of the London contingent, among which are numbered many of the staunchest supporters of hunting in Essex. It was a motley crowd which the Master found assembled to greet him at Heron Gate the first open Saturday after long frost. Cavalry from Colchester; Staff Officers from Warley, endeavouring to brighten the weariness of dépôt duty by intervals of companionship with civilisation; nondescript followers from town; and a score of unknown but well mounted men from some distant quarters almost swamped the local contingent, and set at nought the

authority of the Master, whose attention is so much absorbed by the duties of huntsman and by his keen desire to show sport, that he can have little control over such an undisciplined throng. Happily, however, his patience is not often taxed in this way. Had there been a burning scent and a straight neck fox to lead them a merry chase over the open, many of these holiday horsemen would have been shaken off before half a dozen fields had been crossed ; as it happened, the foxes would ring about the woodlands. Scent there was none, and the crowd were thus enabled to indulge to the utmost their propensity for being always in the wrong place. Lord Petre, who is the best friend of hunting in all the eastern counties, and whose keepers are said to be retained for the combined purpose of preserving foxes and destroying feathered game, cannot fail to furnish a goodly supply of this very necessary element of sport. In fact, there proves such an embarrassment of riches in the well stocked coverts that, with a total absence of scent, the hounds could not stick to the line of one fox. Finding their first in Pigott's Bushes, they ran him for a brief space, then changed to another, and so kept ringing round the park of Thornton and its ruined mansion all day, convinced and half afraid to speak ; a second later, and another deeper note is heard. Then, as the pack breaks into chorus, our long looked for quarry is viewed stealing from brake to brake. A ringing view-holloa makes him jump, and he needs no further warning, but is off like an arrow, and before the

hounds can be got together, his grey back is seen fast disappearing over the brown furrows two fields away. For a brief space the wind has lulled a little, and, settling down on a good scent, the pack streams away in hot pursuit. He who hesitates now must inevitably be left toiling far in rear. The plough is terribly heavy and holding, and the fences come in quick succession; but there are half a dozen well in front who have no thought of turning aside for rotten banks, deep drops, or yawning ditches. Nearest the hounds—a little too near, perhaps, to please a Master who values them—rides young Hugh Massy, of the 56th, whose seat and style would bring forcibly to the minds of a Holderness man recollections of far-famed “Tom Hodgson.” Next comes Mr. White, riding wide, but with always a keen eye on the leading hounds. Then, taking their fences almost in line, are Mr. Horton, Mr. Fred Ind; a stranger in cap and green coat of conventional correctness who, after twenty-five years of absence, has come back to take his share of sport in the old country among people that are all new to him, and to bear himself like a good man and true; Mr. Wright, and Joe Bailey; while close to them come Mr. Courage and the “young uns.” Forward still at a rattling pace, over ground that seems heavier at every stride, leaving North Lands Covert on the right, and never attempting to seek shelter there, our fox faces the next hill gallantly, and holds on towards Vange Gorse. In a roadway at the end of ten minutes we come to our first check;

but it is only for a moment, as a good hound hits it off, carries it down the macadam for a hundred yards or so, and then shows the line where all the pack can own to it joyously across the fallows. A field from Vange Gorse the hounds are at fault again. "Hold hard now, or you will press them over the scent!" Not a moment too soon has that caution come. The old hound swings round again and begins to flourish down a hedgerow. Not waiting for a whimper, the Master at one point and Mr. Horton at another, gives us a lead over a thick thorn fence, that hides rotten banks and a treacherous ditch beyond. There have been dirty coats enough already, but nobody stops now to see whether the number is swelled by other downfalls. Bearing left over the road once more, our hunted fox speeds on, twisting like a hare, and evidently hard pressed, until within one field of the Crown at Laindon Hill. Into a little shaw close by some farm buildings the hounds carry it with a crash of music; but suddenly their chorus ceases. Quickly they are got to the sound of Mr. White's horn, and held on for a cast towards Coombe Wood; but it proves useless, and, being brought back, the hounds tell us where our fox has sneaked along a wet drain, until, happening on the track by which he came, he has retraced his footsteps towards Vange. Over the plough of many fields, and only owing to the line at intervals, the hounds follow slowly, hunting up to Vange Gorse; but the red rascal has too great a start now, and nothing more can be made of it. Twenty

minutes the run has lasted up to that little shaw by Laindon, and the pace over such ground was not to be despised. Martin's Hole was next drawn blank, and even Northlands, where Mr. Edward Ind exercises such firm and uncompromising sway. In Westwood Shaw the hounds came on a vixen napping close to the mouth of her closed kennel. A young hound tried to pull her down, but met his match, and acknowledged with a loud howl the strength of the old lady's fangs. Bounding through the pack, she got clean away, with them almost at her brush. A sharp burst of some five or six minutes brought us back to Bushey Legs, where the vixen disappeared suddenly, and in such mysterious fashion that not a hound could own it afterwards. A heavy storm of wind and rain came at a critical moment, destroying all hopes of recovering this fox, and damping the ardour of many pursuers. Those who stayed to see two or three more coverts drawn, stopped for a ride home in a deluge of rain and a hurricane of wildly whirling wind, that would have made the "worst un's worst room" a welcome shelter.

LINES ON MY LORDS SANDWICH
AND SPENCER.
By E.H.C.

Two noble Lords—the Earls of Sandwich and Spencer—
Have left us fair proof of their Lordship's good sense,
Sir,

By a fashion in dress and invention in diet,
The pangs both of cold and hunger to quiet :
Which, by the covert in the chill of November,
My Sandwich and Spencer oft bade me remember,
When from my full flask I had quaff'd off my port,
And I rode on again refreshed for the sport.

One fine morning we had come to a check on Langdon Hills, and were all standing outside the School at the moment the children were coming out for the dinner hour. At this juncture the field were taking advantage of a momentary pause in the proceedings, and out came the sandwich cases.

The children were very much interested in watching us, and one boy bigger than the rest remarked: "They have stopped to eat their dinners."

Tuesday, January 13th, 1880.

Meet: Stifford.

Found in Moor Hall Spring and had a very pretty twenty minutes' gallop up to the Nightingale's Nest by way of Running Water Wood, a holloa back towards Fourteen Acre induced the Master to go back there, where hounds were soon running hard (not improbably the hunted fox). Going away on the Aveley side they ran back into and through Running Water Wood, and away to Stubbers (a longish check here), got on the line again, and then hounds set to racing, sending their fox over the open country, straight up to Cranham, never touching the Cranham covers, crossing the road near Cranham Rectory, the bitches ran him hard up to Upminster Hall, a short check here, cast them over the road and hit him off again, hounds going on to the Hornchurch brook, crossed it as if for Lea Gardens, but turned right-handed and

ran beautifully straight to the village of Harold Wood, across Great Eastern Railway and high road into the Essex country, through Hatters Wood and across Dayman Park into the oaks, from here to Weald village, turned sharp back across the Park to Rochett's cover, to the brook, again to a small cover. Here there were several foxes afoot, and holloas in several places. Went on with a fox across Rochett's, and up to Workhouse Wood, and gave it up between there and the Moors. One hour and forty minutes up to the cover where so many foxes were afoot. I take the time to here, as hounds never left the line till we got there. I feel sure we changed (though they didn't seem to leave the line) in the Hatters. It was one of the finest runs I have ever seen, as scent was so brilliant that hounds were only cast twice, and the country gone over a most unusual line. No cover either was touched from Nightingale's Nest to Dayman. After hounds crossed the Hornchurch Brook till they got to Harold Wood only three of us were with them, as the rest of the field went back over the Brook thinking hounds had turned back. It was a very good day.

One morning I was riding to the Meet, and on the way met a boy. He was about eleven years of age, and the son of a man farming about 500 acres of land—a grand supporter of hunting—and many a good run have we had over his land; so my feelings can be somewhat imagined when, after talking about his pony and the weather, chances of scent, etc., I said to him, "Many foxes down your way?" "I should

think there are," said the boy. "Why, father was walking by the brook on Sunday and up jumped the greatest old fox ever you see—and father hadn't got a stick, nor yet a gun!!"

In March, 1889 (excepting the King William), we had one of the best runs known with the Essex Union. We found in wood, raced away through Noke Wood, by Fanton Hall, Squeaking Boys' Lane, nearly to Kingsley Wood, where the fox was headed; turned by North Benfleet to Nevendon Bushes, away to the back of Pitsea, over Timber Log Lane as if making for Laindon Hills; down to the back of the Fortune of War, over the road, and away to Lady Springs; up Bottledown Hill, and finally lost him near Little Burstead Church. There was barely a check during the whole time, and the pace was killing. You had no time to select your places. One man jumped into a gravel pit, but I don't think he was the worse for it; in any case, there was no time to enquire. There are very few of us left in the country who rode through the run that day. One man still goes as well as ever; I shall never forget seeing him race down a field at the start, his horse, called Nebuchadnezzar, quite the master of the situation. All the first part of the run the man had a very rough time of it. Dr. Marshall, Mr. Gardiner and Charles Tabor as usual showing us the best way to go, and how to get there quickest. When it was all over, we had to face a long ride home on tired horses, most of them as stiff as poker. Besides that, it was a bitter cold day to start, and to add to our trials snow

was coming down fast; but we did not mind in the least, feeling much too pleased with ourselves and our horses to care for the weather.

I shall never again see a run I enjoyed so much as that one.

October, 1880.

On Tuesday, October 19th, these hounds met at Sutton Ford Bridge for cub hunting, but it turned out to be an "out-and-out" good fox hunt, as the sequel will show. The meet was at ten o'clock sharp, when a goodly gathering put in an appearance. Of ladies there were Mrs. Tawke, Mrs. and Miss Garrood, Miss Boosey, etc., mounted on wheels, Dr. Bourne, R.A., Messrs. Courage, Tabor, Baker (2), Rickett (2), Deane, Hudson, Rankin, Benton (2), Master Victor Tabor, and several more on foot, on horseback, and on wheels. Mr. Carnegie, of course, was there with his pack, looking "for the fray." The hounds came over night, for, let me tell you, Mr. Editor, that this meet is about twenty miles from the Kennels, so the hounds stayed at the old Ship Inn, Rochford, so that they should be ready to account for one of Mr. Cross's Mucking Hall foxes the next morning if possible, for the foxes require a good deal of killing in this part of the country, and to bring weary hounds to do so would be simply fun for the foxes and cruelty to hounds. With the usual congratulations on having appeared to be a splendid hunting morning we jog off to draw Mucking Hall

Grove, which turned out blank, but that is not so much a matter of surprise, considering that it is very narrow—only about three acres in extent—and a footpath running through the middle. It is the only cover in the neighbourhood, however, so a find is generally looked upon as pretty certain this time of the year. We then move on to a field of cole seed adjoining, where the hounds found immediately, as that “fine specimen of the old English yeoman” (Mr. Cross) assured us we should. Now then “all you despairing souls,” harden your hearts and look out for the blind fences, for you are in for a good thing! The fox soon makes up her mind that her only safety depends on flight; so betakes herself off without a moment’s hesitation, pointing for Butler’s, the residence of that good fox preserver, Mr. Perry. Crossing his land, she sets her mark for Shopland, then towards New Hall, Sutton, giving the field a taste of timber, in the shape of a five-barred gate or two, which are safely negotiated by Mr. Charles Tabor (on his clever hunter), closely followed by Miss Tawke. This brings us to the Prittlewell, Sutton Brook, where our gentleman, who has been going well, had a morning’s bath in company with his four-footed companion. Fortunately, no serious harm came of it, but neither came out of said bath much the cleaner. If I were they I should not get in again, certainly not before it was cleaned out; even then I should rather object. But I am wasting time. Hounds are going hard, and cross the road not far from Halfway House, and on to Mr. James

Tabor's big field, where we have a check; not for long, however, as Mr. Carnegie hits off the line "like a workman," as he is, and Duster cuts out the work for the pack, pointing for West Barrow Hall and the Eastwood Water Meadows. She does not enter these, however, but turns sharp to the left, past Mr. Stallibrass' residence, and its "ding dong," as hard as you can, to keep pace with the "dappled darlings." Away we go over the road, pointing for Mr. Allerton's, scent good and fences blind; from there straight for Chalkwell Hall. We are now running with the sea in view, and what our good fox means to do she must soon determine. But what is that beat figure near the water's edge? Why our hunted fox! Another minute, and the Southend Railway is the only thing between her and her pursuers. A turn inland by the beach, a double over the line of rail, and we are in the Hamlet Brickfields at Southend. A scurry round the bricks, a snap, a growl, and Duster has her at the hedge, and its all up with as game a little two-year-old vixen as ever was cubbed. Well done, Mr. Carnegie. You have tasted blood in Rochford Hundred, and there's plenty more foxes left that will feel hurt if you don't hunt them, or they will all die of "fatty degeneration." Let them have plenty of that good old physic, "Essex Union Anti-fat," in the shape of frequent doses of fox hounds' music to dance to —no one will complain of its strength and frequency. To resume, after we had broken up our fox we drew some cole seed at Eastwood and West Barrow without a find. Then we just

ran up to the Lawn, as, of course, it would be a sin to pass "The Lawn" without acknowledging the hospitality of our good friends, Major and Mrs. Tawke, which is always so ungrudgingly dispensed to all comers—the more so as it is so very acceptable, and so much appreciated by all. It would be a good thing for fox hunting if there were more of their sort about the country. We now draw the wood called Potash, which we know is almost a certain find, for the foxes are well looked after in this cover, and many are the rats that have been put down for the foxes in this wood, thanks to the owner and his "better half." This time it does not belie its reputation as a fine fellow crosses the ride just as hounds are "thrown in." He goes away at the top end, but scent has altered for the worse, and we cannot do much with him, so we all go home well pleased with a capital day's sport, and fully impressed with the fact that if scent is at all accommodating this season the foxes will not be troubled with "fatty degeneration" in the Essex Union country; at least, we feel assured that nothing will be wanting on the part of Mr. Carnegie or his whips to show Essex gentlemen the way they do things "over the border."

When all went so well it would be invidious to make comparisons, but Mr. C. Tabor and a lady took some five-barred gates in rare style, and Master Victor entered well to hounds, showing that the Tabor love of the chase is not likely to die out at present. The young gentleman was rewarded with the brush, which he well

deserved, considering the riding abilities he displayed.

November.

The Essex Union met at the Lawn, at Rochford, Major Tawke's place; and a large field sat down to breakfast. Captain Carnegie has already shown his intention of hunting the country with spirit and thoroughness, and ardent sportsmen in the Union country are hoping to see a continuance of the good fields with which the season has opened. A very fair sprinkling of symmetrical habits and coquettish hats is to be seen careering over the flats of southern Essex; and their owners, whose prowess in former seasons is well remembered, are rarely far away at the crisis. The Forfarshire Captain has already shown the country some very respectable sport, and foxes are understood to be plentiful. The East Essex have commenced their first regular season without their old Secretary, Mr. Page Wood. The inaugural meet and breakfast took place at Mr. H. R. G. Marriott's, at Abbot's Hall, which was for many years the headquarters of the Hunt. An hour's rattling run and a double kill certainly made a good beginning. Sir Henry Ibbetson met a good field at Matching, when the Essex Hunt—I wish the names of the Essex packs were a little more distinctive—had what has been described to me as “a glorious opening.”



TRAPPED FOX.

TRAPPED FOX.

How grievous it is to see the sad changes in the Hadleigh country. Mr. Carnegie used to say it had been left as "God Almighty made it." Now I am afraid another "gentleman" has a hand in the job. There are little houses, like ants' nests, and a complete bird cage of wire forms the gardens. One man kept a fox trap always going near the main earth, with the result that I have seen him clothed down to the waist entirely in foxes skins. Another sportsman caught a fox in his hen house, and being of a saving turn of mind, he skinned it and boiled the flesh for his dogs. The result was his neighbours were poisoned by the smell, and there was some talk of calling in the sanitary inspector.

* * * * *

How often one sees the folly of putting an inexperienced rider on too good a horse. I do not mean that he should not be a clever one, because it goes without saying, what the man does not know the horse ought. One that has seen his best days and not over keen is the sort. The beginner should be entirely master of the situation. I remember many years ago when, as a child, hunting with the Brighton Harriers, in the charge of Mr. Poole, the riding master, Captain Grant came up to me. "Why," said he, "your pony has only three legs." I was

horrified, and ambled away to Mr. Poole. "Oh Mr. Poole, Captain Grant says Kitty has only three legs."—"Quite right, Miss, if she had four you would not be able to manage her."

I have often thought since how true that was, and what a clever riding master Mr. Poole was.

October 19th, 1880.

Hounds met at Sutton, found in Potash; went away to Shopland, turned over Warner's Corner to Leigh, where the fox was shot in front of the hounds. Very fast.

I opened a bazaar exactly thirty-one years after in the same spot where we ran that fox. Who could have believed it possible in what appears so short a time to look back upon, instead of the fields and fences we crossed that day, a town has sprung up. In my opening speech I mentioned the run of thirty years ago, but what seemed to impress the audience most was the fox being shot in front of the hounds—doubtless they thought what a lot of trouble it saved.

January 10th, 1881.

We found in Merrylands and ran with a burning scent to Hadleigh. Only George Rae, Charles Tabor and the two Bakers were in it. Manly, much to Charles Tabor's annoyance, got first to the only negotiable place in the Hadleigh Brook, and his horse, not quite fancy-



WITH THE BRIGHTON HARRIERS.

ing the job, was "pausing on the brink," filling up the only available hole, Charles Tabor from behind laying into him with his hunting crop for all he was worth. If one had not been in a bit of a hurry at the time, it would have afforded a most amusing spectacle.

February 2nd,

Meet at Danbury. Good scent; capital day.

THE ESSEX UNION HOUNDS.

(Taken from *The Field*).

26th February,

The sport with these Hounds has improved very much of late; in fact, the country is holding a scent—a commodity which has been sadly deficient throughout the season. On Saturday, the 19th, they had a very good hour and three-quarters in the afternoon, ending with a clinking forty-five minutes and a kill. Frost and snow had prevented the hounds going out on Monday and Tuesday; indeed, the state of the weather on Thursday would have prevented a less indefatigable sportsman than Mr. Carnegie taking his hounds out; but he is not the man to stay at home so long as there is even an outside chance of hunting, and in this instance I am glad to say

a fair day's sport rewarded him for his zeal. Stock was the fixture on Saturday week, and, as usual at this Meet, a very large field attended. After spending an hour and a half in fruitless search for fox, the hounds showed a line in Rook Wood, which they carried to a faggot stack, showing unmistakably that a fox had sought shelter within it. The stack was immediately stormed by half a dozen enthusiastic votaries of the chase, headed by the "Nestor" of the hunt. Their united efforts soon rendered the strong-hold untenable, and as good a fox as ever went out on a midnight excursion, "on amatory thought intent," betook himself to the open, trusting to strong legs and a stout heart to carry him out of harm's way. But in a twinkling the Master had his hounds on the line, and, running for a few fields in a northerly direction, they crossed the railway near Margaretting. Here they showed a second line, the majority of the pack picking out a cold scent to the right, while a couple of hounds were observed racing away to the left. No sooner was this fact communicated to the Master than he hastened to join them; and now business began in real earnest. With heads up and sterns down the hounds settled to their work, driving their fox through a succession of coverts without the very semblance of a check, to Skreens Park. Here he was viewed about two hundred yards in front, and most of us thought the end was at hand. All the same, he managed to cross into Skreens Wood, and immediately after the hounds were at fault—by no means an unwelcome check

either, as most of those who had ridden the line had bellows to mend, and the macadamites obtained a lucky opportunity of nicking in. For a little time the hounds could make nothing of him; but, with moderate luck, our Master is a bad one to beat (and, I may add, a rum one to follow). A cast back had our fox on the move again, and scarcely had the hounds spoken to him, when he was viewed stealing away from the north side of the covert. Though the scent was now simply wretched, so admirably were the hounds handled that they ran into their fox fair and square within a couple of hundred yards of the King William Inn, after one hour and fifty minutes' pursuit. As I am a stranger in that part of the country, I cannot give the exact points; but this much I do know, that the first or brilliant part of the run, namely, from Rook to Skreens Wood, occupied as nearly as possible an hour, and that we were all going as fast as we could. The casualties were the reverse of "angels' visits," one brook receiving no less than four men and horses into its chilling embrace. All the same the following gentlemen saw most of the fun:—Messrs. Saunders, Colley, Tabor (2), Bourne, Hilton, Garratt, Lawrence (2), Barker, Horton, Usbourne, Ridley, Sir L. Graham, and a few others whose names I cannot remember, or do not know, notably a man with a bandage round his thigh. Miss Tawke, on her grey, occupied a prominent position in the first flight throughout.

[The mask of this fox hangs in our hall. This is the best run ever known with the Essex

Union Hounds. I may feel proud to think I managed to be in it.]

The foregoing is still talked about as "the famous King William run."

March 10th,

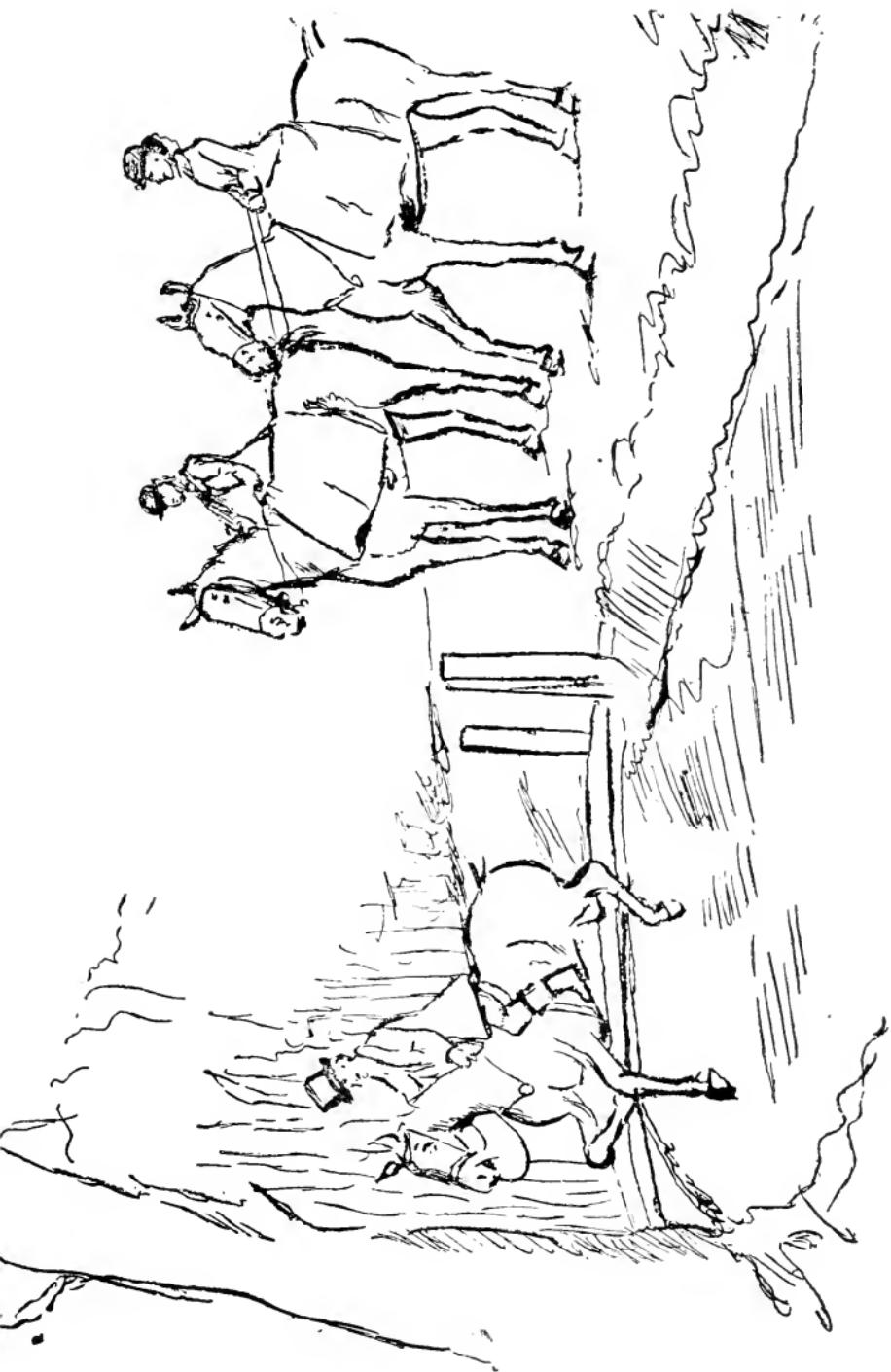
Met at Southminster; it was a very hard day for horses; we were always on the go. Charles Tabor got into a ditch, where it was likely his horse would remain. During the run we had to cross over the brook at Moor Gardens by the horrid narrow bridge.

Jack Page's horse slipped over and got in the brook; I came next and nearly did the same; Madge dropped one hind leg, but recovered herself just in time to save me from taking a cold bath.

November 14th. Monday. Sutton Ford.

Fine day, but foggy. Found on the marshes at Barling, and had a quick fifteen minutes, then changed foxes and had another quarter of an hour in the same neighbourhood. Found again in a little spinney at Thorpe, and went a racing pace for nine minutes, and to ground close to Shoebury Garrison, running in view over the last field. A good field out, but many Taylors from Southend, one of which tumbled about a good deal.

Most of this run took place round the big field at Thorpe where at the time there was



DISAGREEABLE POSITION OF MR. JACK PAGE.

not one single house. Thorpe Bay has become a town with a golf links, and is quite a flourishing portion of the district of Southend.

The following accounts have been supplied from the hunting diary of a sportsman who has hunted with the Essex Union for many a season, and only a short time back he reminded me "there are only six of us remaining of the 150 to 200 who hunted in Captain White's time." We six have seen the most extraordinary changes.

I have given the notes without adding much to them, they so well describe the many excellent runs of that period, and bring back the whole thing so vividly to my mind that I am afraid of spoiling them. There is much truth in the saying of "too many cooks," and again "two people cannot churn butter," and the few who remember those good old days would not thank me for altering the very excellent description given.

November 17th. Thursday.

Stow Bullocks.

Dull day and windy in the morning. Found in Fambridge Hall, but the scent was so bad, that we could do nothing. We then went to Purleigh Round Bush, but on the way there got on the line of a fox, which took us through the Round Bush to Clarke's Wood, and on through Fambridge Hall to a drain at Jarvis'

Farm, by the Ferry; time twenty-one minutes. Bolted him from there, and ran him for seven or eight minutes to the Hall Wood and lost. The first part of the run was very good. Found again in Mundon Furze, and had a slow hunting run of about forty-five minutes to Wrights Leys.

NOTE.—Rochford Hundred saw the best of it, including our general, Charles Tabor.

November 19th. Saturday. Roxwell.

Fine day, with a little rain during the night. Did not find till we got to Langley's, where we found a good fox, which took us right into the East Essex country. First across the Park, then to Lyons Hall, which we went through without dwelling, and on to Sandy, where there was a slight check. Up to this point we had had a good twenty-four minutes over a nice country. Then on through Scarlets to Hazelton, where we lost our fox through putting up several others. Time altogether, fifty-seven minutes, the latter part slow hunting. I then left to come home, as we were in the middle of East Essex country, and the hounds had at least eight miles to go back before drawing again.

This was one of the very few occasions on which I have been out with the Essex Hounds, and I very much enjoyed the capital run, and appreciated the skill with which Bailey handled his hounds. I have several times heard him speak at the Puppy Judging Luncheons, and on one occasion one of his fellow judges said,

“ If Bailey had been a parson instead of a huntsman, by now he would have become Archbishop of Canterbury,” and as this remark came from a gentleman of the cloth, and one of no mean order, that must have been a proud moment for Bailey—showing the high estate he had attained in his profession. He is another example of what I have so often remarked on before, that Essex people keep going for an extraordinary length of time.

December 1st. Thursday.

East Hanningfield.

Dull day and wet. Got on to the line of a fox in a field on Jeo Crack’s Farm, which took us down to the brook, up the hill at the back of Rasch’s house, through Danbury Park, over Lingwood Common, and through Lingwood, where we had a check after a very good twenty-six minutes, the fox having been headed in the road, back on to the Common, then through a corner of Mr. Water’s Common, then through Summers Wood, Ratcliffs Grove, and into the Thrift, when we ran to ground after a good hour and three minutes. Found again in the Hydes, ran through the Thrift, along the top of Barrit’s Farm to Wood Corner Grove, and on to the Schools at Maldon, checked in some gardens there, then ran back and killed at the back of Maldon Hall, time forty seven minutes. I managed to jump into a pond in the first run.

December 2nd.

Was a memorable day in the history of the Essex Union Hunt, and I am convinced of one fact; no one who was *unfortunate* enough to be out will ever forget it. It was a pouring wet day; the Meet was at Hockley Bull, and that was the last anyone saw of the Hounds until quite late in the afternoon. No sooner were they in the Bull Wood, than they must have got away at once on the line of a fox, running absolutely mute and gone straight through the covert without dwelling a moment. The result was hounds were miles away before it even dawned on anyone what had occurred, and for hours Mr. Carnegie, whips and field and all were riding all over the country enquiring for the hounds.

The first man to come up with the pack was Tiger Bournes, and the only reliable information was obtained from a man in a baker's cart. He said he had seen hounds crossing the Leigh Road, and when at last we found them at Hadleigh Castle they had killed and eaten their fox. I see entered in my diary: "Mr. Carnegie's face was a *study*." The most vexatious circumstance, besides being wearied out with riding in all directions, without result, was missing such a good run; it is only about once in a lifetime there is a scent to carry a fox through the Bull Woods.

December 5th.

The Meet was at Hadleigh. It was rain-

ing in torrents. Field numbered seven. Found in Kingsley Wood; we simply raced away, where Rayleigh Station now is; north of Down Hall, on past Trende Henry's as though we were going to Hull Bridge; swung sharp left-handed, running due north leaving Bedlow's Corner and Rawreth Church on the west, ran straight on down to the River Thames and killed after forty-five minutes. His point was no doubt Mr. Kemble's coverts, but we caught him before he had time to cross the water.

I was riding a very good horse called Bunker, he jumped a fence under a tree bigger than I expected, and I damaged my nose to such an extent that I regret to add it has never recovered to this day. Otherwise the run was most enjoyable.

December 24th.

Met at Danbury. A very hard day; I left them still running.

December 27th.

Met at the Fortune of War. Running hard all day, but never any point. I have reason to remember it! "Madge" gave me a fall, which was a most unusual occurrence. I always said she had five legs. I was inspired by seeing Colonel Kemble jump his iron-grey horse over the brook below the Fortune of War, to do likewise; the place where Madge took off was underhung and she dropped into the water;

I shot over her shoulders and found myself sitting amongst the bushes, and so escaped a cold bath.

January 3rd, 1882.

Met at Woodham. Splendid run and kill in the open. Very fast at times.

January 7th.

Met at Billericay. Hounds divided. Mr. Carnegie was in no end of a temper. Went home at 2.30. I never saw so many falls.

January 19th.

We met at Stow; had a capital day. Madge was cooked to a turn: she came on her head at the last fence. Charles Tabor said, "Good job your mare *had* a head to land on!"

February 13th.

Horrid windy day. Meet at Hadleigh; had a charming run; found in Hadleigh Big Wood, ran across Eastwood and killed at Rochford Rectory.

February 18th.

Meet at Burstead. Bessie and Mr. Wightman Wood out. A very good run; found in Mill Hill, ran to North Benfleet, turned again northwards, and lost at Stock. Mr.

Wood was riding Mulvaney's one-eyed mare, called "Patent-Safety." He was very nearly drowned trying to ford the river west of Battlesbridge. He is now a Judge, so we will hope he has learnt wisdom. On another occasion when he was out with "Patent-Safety," he took a toss into the brook below Pandam, lost his watch and purse containing £5. For days afterwards the whole juvenile population spent its spare moments wading about in the brook in search of treasure.

September 30th. Saturday. Belvoir Arms.

Fine morning. Went cub hunting for the first time this season. Met at 7 a.m. Found plenty of foxes in Mill Wood and Foxearths, also Moor Gardens, but the scent was not good enough to do much with them. Carnegie had a fall, and got his leg squashed between his horse and the bank, but I don't think much damage done; anyhow, we left off there.

NOTE.—Mr. Carnegie was most unfortunate in meeting with accidents. He fell heavily, and there was such a length of him, that when he did come down there was generally some portion of his body under the horse.

October 23rd.

Met at Rochford. Mr. Carnegie not out, so George hunted the hounds. Found at Barton Hall, ran by Loftman's, over Scott's Hall, Hyde-Ashingdon, and killed at Trinity.

A most enjoyable run. One man managed to get into a ditch north of Barton Hall, and would have been there still if he had not been dug out.

October 26th.

Met at Baddow. No scent. Very much vexed on arriving at the river at Hull Bridge to find the ferry boat had gone to be painted or tarred or something; the result was a weary tramp round by Battlesbridge.

November 4th,

Met at Downham. Mr. Carnegie said it was only fit to dry clothes, not to hunt a fox, and so he went home.

November 9th. Thursday. Stow Bullocks.

Fine day, cold, and cloudy at times. Found at Farnham Hall, but were unable to get a fox away. Went to Mundon Furze, and had a slow run with very catchy scent through Purleigh Round Bush to Wright's Leys, and on through Brook Mead Grove to Gale's, where we lost. Found another at Hawe's Wood, which took us to the Grove, then to Partridge's, and back to Hawes, where I left them in the wood. This being my first regular day with the Union, turned out in pink for the first time in my life.

NOTE.—Don't I remember the sensation caused by the writer's appearance in the same



MR. DANIEL ROBERT SCRUTTON, 1st, Master of the Essex Union
Hounds, PAGE 19, VOL. 1.

pink coat, and the admiring crowd by whom he was surrounded—all loud in their praise of his faultless attire.

November 27th. Monday. Rayleigh.

Fine day, cold, westerly wind. Went by Hull Bridge to the Meet. Found our first fox on a hedge-row just outside Hockley Hall Wood, ran it through the wood and afterwards in the open and to ground near Blunt's Wood; about eighteen minutes. Found a second in Hockley Bull Wood, which gave us a good gallop, going straight away from the covert at once at a good pace to the Hadleigh Wood, which we pushed him through without dwelling, and on to Hadleigh Castle; then we turned back, and once more made the wood; forty-seven minutes up to this. Again straight through it, and on to Pound Wood, after which we did nothing more. Time altogether, one hour and five minutes, and a good run.

December 16th.

Hunted with the East Essex and had a very good run. The Meet was at Boreham.

January 13th, 1883.

Again I hunted with the East Essex at Boreham, and had a most enjoyable run.

January 20th.

The Meet was at Wickford, and we were foolishly trying an experiment—driving a hunter

in the cart, which had been sold as quiet in harness; and so he was, for about every mile or so he "put up" and refused to move. However, after enduring agonies of suspense, we arrived at Wickford at twelve—exactly the right moment. We met hounds running hard; they had crossed the river, leaving the field on the other side. So, as it turned out, we were rather pleased, as we had hounds to ourselves; and during that happy time Mr. Baker jumped the brook south of Runwell Hall. It is not the sort of place you would select, but Tiger had complete control of the situation, and decided to show what he was made of.

February 2nd.

The East Essex Hounds met at Danbury by invitation. At that time foxes ran about like mice, and it was impossible to catch them; and so the East Essex wanted to try what they could do. "They hunted and they hallooed, and they blew the horn all day," but without any result. However, we all enjoyed the fun, and I am sure Mr. Carnegie did.

February 15th.

Was a red-letter day. The Meet was at Woodham; found in the Woodham coverts and ran over Woodham Lodge, Hyde Hall, past Square Grove, Rettendon, Kemble's coverts, Flemings, south of Downham Rectory, Meps Hole, Crays Wood and on to Norsey, where we lost him. This took forty-one minutes to do.

I had a very unpleasant ride home—Banker was not at any time the best of hacks. “Which leg is my horse lame with?” “Impossible to say,” replied Charles Tabor, “because he is lame all round.” Though a very good hunter, Banker was by no means fast, and I expect the run had been a bit too sharp for him.

February 21st. Wednesday. Cricketers.

Fine day, westerly wind. Had a day with the East Essex at Danbury, where they had come by invitation. Found on Lingwood Common, and had a lot of hunting between there, N.W. Common and Danbury, and eventually lost; found again in Long Springs, and had a short gallop. Afterwards came down to the Hydes, but unfortunately found them blank for the first time this season.

NOTE.—This was the memorable day (when foxes used to swarm around Danbury like mice) the East Essex were invited to show their skill in catching them. There was no end of rushing about and holloaing—no result. Mr. Carnegie sat still watching the performance with the keenest delight.

February 22nd. Thursday. Stow Bullocks.

Fine, warm day, south westerly wind. Found directly in Cambridge Hall Wood and ran down to and round the Rectory at a good pace, back over the Rookery Farm, through Pantile, over the hill by the Rise,

skirting Purleigh Hall Wood and on to Purleigh Hall, then made a turn to the left by the windmill to the bottom of Hanging Wood, over Hazeleigh Glebe, and across the field to Wood Corner Grove, after which we had slow hunting over part of Maldon Hall Farm and Sam Ratcliff's, on to Beeleigh, where we killed after a very good hunting run of two hours twenty minutes, the hounds picking out the scent during the last hour in a marvellous manner. We then trotted on to the Thrift, and found directly, going away at a racing pace towards the Schools, then through our wood, over the hill to Mr. Rayner's, through Box Iron and Hanging Wood to the Corporation, twenty-three minutes. Here I believe we changed, and went on through New England, Squeaking Gate and the Hall Wood, and on towards Woodham Fen; on Allans Hill we came to a check, after fifty-one minutes, and then on to F. Hart's Farm, through Edwin's Hall, and on to Hawes, where we lost; time from find to finish, one hour and fifteen minutes, horses and hounds all having had quite enough of it, the country being very heavy.

March 27th.

We met at Rochford. A "scented" fox had been provided, but the sportsman who undertook the job had used no light hand; the result was a regular fiasco. We "found" on Hampton Barns, and hounds got on the line; but they ran the tail line as well, and so up and

down the field they went, as Charles Tabor said, "for all the world like the piston of an engine"; and there we all sat aghast watching the hunt.

The rest of the day has rather escaped my memory.

October 27th.

Meet at Downham; two first rate runs and kills.

November 1st.

Met at Rettendon. Good day.

December 20th.

We had a capital run. Met at Rettendon, found in Square Grove; ran fast by Nevendon on to Dollermans. The fox took refuge under the old barn, which was almost demolished before Mr. Fox was dislodged. I was riding Tiger; he had a most unpleasant habit of working the bit through his mouth. Someone who saw my helpless condition sent me a most useful Christmas present: it was a bit, with long side pieces, and with that I was entirely master of the situation, and Tiger was forced to keep the bit in his mouth.

December 26th.

Met at Woodham Fen; found in Reddings. There was a capital scent, and if it had not been for a thick fog, which spoilt everything, we should have had a most enjoyable day.

Rebecca, the big chestnut mare, put me down somewhere close to Reddings, and Charles Tabor told me afterwards she set three feet of four on my prostrate form during her struggles to get up.

January 1st, 1884.

The Meet was at Downham. We found in Well Wood, and ran in two wide circles by Houndon, and killed at Muggleton's Farm, Sandon. There was a burning scent, and at times hounds raced. George's little mare, Polly, carried him like a bird.

It was quite a red-letter day, and I thoroughly enjoyed the run.

One man, who has deserted us now for many a long day, was riding a new purchase for the first time; it was a beautifully made little brown horse, but he went mad directly hounds ran, and away he went with his new owner, and only pulled up when completely blown; he had rolled into the middle of a ditch.

Needless to say, he had a place secured at Tattersall's for next available sale, and I believe he sold well; he was such a very taking horse, so long as you did not have to ride him.

January 19th.

Meet at Burstead; fair day.

January 31st.

The Meet was at Stow Bullocks, and, up till four o'clock a bitter cold day, with occasional

snow storms. Charles Tabor and I agreed to see them draw Squags Grove and then off home. We were no distance to speak of, but before one had time to think of it hounds were racing away on a burning scent, and on they went, every yard taking us further from home; but the end came at last, and after a nine mile point the fox was killed at Woodham Walter Church; and, after such a good run, we did not complain of the long dark ride in front of us.

February 4th,

Rochford was the Meet. Had a very good run from the Bull Woods to Lion Creek, Paglesham. We went by Clement's Hall, Ashingdon, Hyde's Wood, Pudsey Hall, by Canewdon (where the Witches dwell in peace to this day)*, Lambourne Hall, and down to the water, where Mr. Fox beat us.

At one time during this good run I found myself hanging head downwards, having been swept clean out of the saddle by a thick fence. Fortunately Tiger knew as much as most people, and, finding out something was wrong, remained quiet until Charles Tabor came up and set me free. No damage was done, and we went on again.

February 25th.

Met at Hockley; not much of a day. The only reason I remember anything about the day is, Rebecca, the big chestnut mare, broke her pastern bone: it was done in such a foolish way.

We had just found in Potash, and we were galloping through a disused farmyard; I suppose she came on a stone covered with grass—it was done in a moment.

March 6th.

Met at Latchingdon. Very nice run.

March 14th.

Fortune of War. Very good day.

October 20th.

Meet was at Thundersley. Good day, and killed at the Carpenter's Arms.

November 24th.

Met at Rayleigh, found in Pound Wood; out on the north side pointing for Rawreth Hall, but turning left-handed along the brook we went over Lime House, through the Plantations and on to Coombe Wood; without dwelling a moment they were away on the west side, crossing the Pitsea Road on to Bowers, to Canvey Island; and this good run only came to an end when we reached the river Thames.

Tiger managed to subside into a ditch, but I can't complain much as during the twenty years I rode him he only gave me three falls. He was a very powerful horse, and if he did put a foot wrong, he could generally recover himself before I had time to fall off. It used to be said of Tiger, he could climb a tree or go down a well in safety.

One gloriously fine hot day in the spring—just the weather one would select for a point to point meeting, or even a horse show, or, more appropriate a picnic—but not at all calculated to inspire the ardent sportsman with the slightest hope of the chance of a run, let alone a scent—when hounds met in the middle of March at Nevendon, being near the end of the season, there was a fairly large field out. Suddenly, on the far side of a high fence, in an uncultivated field, there came the welcome holloa, and away we raced with a burning scent. Dr. Marshall, Mr. Gardiner, and all the men one would expect to meet on such occasions were there, and they had to ride.

I very soon made the discovery that we were in pursuit of no ordinary fox, and the scent was of the strongest. A gallant sportsman galloping down a field beside me said, "What a scent there is; yonder they go racing, and who could have expected it in such brilliant sunshine?" I looked at him, and saw that he was quite unaware we were riding after a drag, and so I left him in ignorance. I know how perfectly miserable he would have been if the true state of affairs had dawned on him, and he was thoroughly enjoying himself. I feel sure Mr. Carnegie knew the game, because after racing for forty minutes and *killing our fox* in a ditch near Fan Hall, as he was moving off to draw Runwell, I asked him, "Any use going on?"

"No, I think not; there won't be such a scent this afternoon."

And years after I heard the details of the preparation for that run. The first part was a drag, and a fox had been procured to turn down at the right moment ; but unfortunately by some means he got stifled during the night, and the only thing to prevent him from getting stiff was to keep him in a pail of hot water. Besides this, the hounds ran so fast, they all but caught the man who was running the drag ; but it all ended well, and besides Mr. Carnegie, very few of the field discovered there was anything out of the common, excepting that they had enjoyed a most unlooked-for and pleasant run.

POULTRY CLAIMS.

For many years I have done the work of assistant to the Secretary, and very few even hunting people know what it means to undertake the job. In the first place, when you go to interview irate persons from whom you have had complaints of wire cut, gaps made, horses let out and last heard of twenty miles away, cows let out so that no afternoon milk could be obtained for the customers, you come away feeling you are responsible for the whole thing, and have done every bit of the damage yourself. I always say I have been round with my oil can, but at times one has to put up with all sorts of most unpleasant people. On the other hand, it is a first-rate means of becoming acquainted with one's neighbours, and I am bound to say I have made many friends during these excursions.

With poultry claims, I always begin the business by asking when the things were taken, and if the answer is "At night," I reply, "I am very sorry, but I can't advise the Secretary to pay for poultry taken at night; you should keep your birds shut up."

Next I ask: "What sort of footmark was it?" If he answers, "Just like a dog's," I may feel pretty sure it is the work of a self-hunting dog. Few people seem to know it, but a fox's footmark is very much like a cat's. Often the claimant says, "Oh, we have asked the policeman, and he says he is quite sure it is a fox." Now, though I have the greatest respect for the police force, few are able to give advice on such a subject.

Many years ago I was thoroughly taken in myself. I had several beautiful birds taken by a fox—*as I thought*—some were carried away, and feathers strewn about all over the place (I must say the whole plan was well carried out). Several years after a man, called Bottle Thomas, a noted poacher, was dying in the Union, and he confessed he was the fox who had taken my Buff Orpingtons. This same man had a dog called the Dodger, and he knew nearly as much as his master. When he caught a rabbit or hare, if he met anyone in his path, he would leave the path and make a tour of the field, until the coast was clear. A policeman was the Dodger's especial horror, and he would keep a look-out and be ready to give notice to his master. It is astonishing how poacher's dogs

learn their business in the clever manner they do.

Of all persons who have sent in poultry claims and whom from time to time I have had to interview, I think a Lady Doctor who kept a Home for Inebriates took the biscuit, and made me feel small and of no importance.

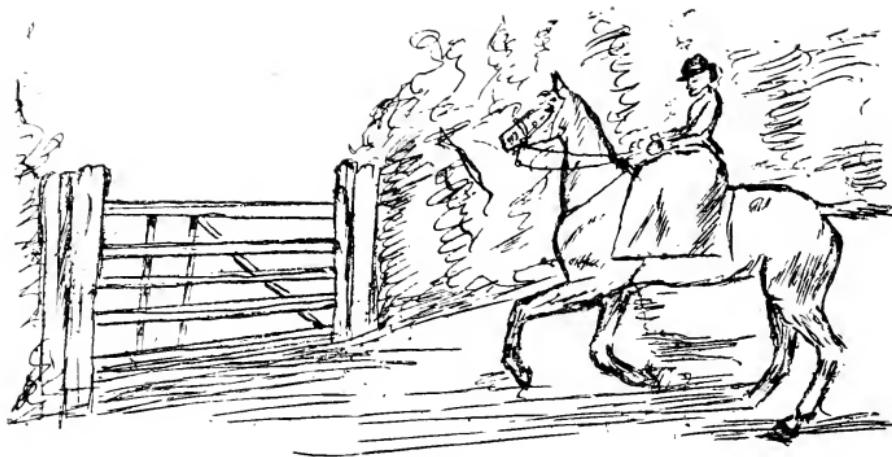
“Ride,” she said, “you people who come about here think you can ride. Why, you should see the country I used to ride over in Australia. We used to come down drops the height of this house.”

After that I collapsed, and paid her what she wanted.

LOSSES.

It would be quite impossible to say the amount of poultry I lose during the year owing to the visits of my neighbour, the fox. On Sunday, which he observes as a special feast day, Mr. Fox went down to the pond and destroyed sixteen large white Aylesbury ducks; some he ate, others he took home. The remainder he buried alive for a more convenient season, and my poultryman found the poor ducks, with their legs stuck up out of the ground.

The day following hounds met at Rayleigh. I asked Mr. Carnegie to come and punish my enemy. After a few moments’ consideration: “Not I,” he replied, “while the fox is eating your things, he won’t trouble other people. I shall go to Hadleigh.”



ANTICIPATION.



REALIZATION.

THE AUTHOR, PAGE 61, VOL. 1.

THE ESSEX UNION HOUNDS.

(Taken from *The Field*).

With all its humidity, there must be something in the air of Essex that conduces to the longevity of man, and to the preservation of pristine vigour to a green old age. Whether it may be the plentiful supply of ozone borne from the North Sea across the eastern marshes, or the many mingled odours that are wafted up from Barking and the Thames, or the cheery good fellowship that makes life pleasant, or the combination of all these, I cannot pretend to say; but certainly few hunting fields with which I am acquainted can boast so many veteran sportsmen, who, in their seventh decade, are still going with all the vigour of boys, as the Essex Union. If it were possible to estimate the influence of fox hunting on health, we should probably find that it adds many more years to the sum of human life than are taken away by the accidents which sometimes form a sad chapter in hunting records.

Although this article was written over thirty years ago the same thing strikes strangers now, and we who were going then, are the old ones now, and pride ourselves many of us still take a lot of beating.

If this side of the picture could only be made clear to the dyspeptic grumblers who denounce our sport as childish and irrational, more of them would probably join our ranks, in

the hope of winning back something of their boyish freshness of feeling and fulness of health; at any rate, they might well envy some veteran followers of Mr. White's pack the possession of these desirable qualities. There is Mr. Davidson, the father of the hunt, who has apparently quite abandoned his idea of retiring from the field, and who, after a little rest, has come again, as all good ones do, hale and hearty as ever. He does not ride hard now, but his keen enjoyment of the sport evidently does not diminish, and one may hope that a younger generation bearing his name will cherish an equal enthusiasm. Mr. Robert Cotton, of Snaresbrook, is another, in whom a youthful fondness for the chase seems to increase with the advance of years; and he, unlike Mr. Davidson, goes as straight as the hardest riding man of them all still. An Indian sun, under which he lived, I think, for nearly thirty years, has apparently left no ill effects on him—it certainly has not lessened either his activity or pluck. If a stranger to the country should need a pilot, he could do no better than select the "old 'un," from whom the hounds are never able to get away. However fast the pace or formidable the fences may be, he is nearly always in a good place, and yet nobody has ever known him have a second horse out. Knowledge of the country and the usual run of foxes may frequently help him to this enviable position, and enable him to save his horse; but nobody will say he ever turns aside from a fair hunting obstacle to seek the friendly aid of a road, and his quick decision

in taking the right line is more like the result of unerring instinct (I know Mr. Cotton will object to the word) than the slow process of fallible reason. Then there is Mr. Tom Kemble, of Runwell, a capital preserver who in the course of a long career has hardly ever jumped a fence, but who has probably viewed more foxes than any man living. Nobody ever went faster along roads or slower over a country than he, and no one ever held hunting for its own sake and apart from the wild excitement of riding, in higher esteem. If landholders in other parts of Essex only possessed something of the same spirit there would not be many coverts drawn blank. In this respect, however, the Essex Union are exceptionally fortunate. Unfriendly proprietors or lessees of coverts with a fondness for pheasants rather than foxes will, of course, always be found in any country, and especially near London; but they cannot long resist the opinion of their neighbours when a feeling in favour of fox preservation is as strong as it is here. The example of Lord Petre has perhaps a great deal to do with this, and it would be a day of ill omen for hunting in South Essex were the Lord of Thorndon Park to discontinue the sport. Happily, however, a love of hunting is a tradition in the family. The late Lord Petre was master of these hounds before Mr. Scratton's day, and the present holder of the title, though he does not hunt now, is the staunchest supporter in the country. Lord of twenty thousand acres, he insists on all the tenants within his domain preserving foxes,

indeed they all covenant to do so ; and instant dismissal would be the fate of any keeper against whom the M.F.H. might lodge a complaint. If other great landholders were to follow this excellent example we should not hear so much of the scarcity of foxes or of actions for trespass against pursuers.

Sir Thomas Lennard, in the south, is another good friend to fox hunters, whose coverts, however well stocked with game, are always a sure find. In fact, nearly every part of the country can show a plentiful supply of the red rascals, some coverts being even too well stocked for sport ; but this is a fault that will soon be remedied if Mr. White's pack continue to rattle them about as merrily as they have done thus early in the season. Owing to the fact that very little cub hunting could be got, foxes still run short in some of the more woodland parts, and those who prefer a long run and a merry one would naturally prefer a day in the open country about Maldon to one among the denser coverts on the home side. Between Hazeleigh and the Marshes is the cream of Mr. White's country, if such a term can be applied to any hunting ground where there is scarcely an acre of pasture to be found and all is deep plough. [How very much surprised the writer of this article would be to ride over the Union country and find at least half of it grass. I am sure of one thing, scent has not improved through the change, and we ran better over the ploughs when the place was in a high state of cultivation than is the case in the present day.

In one thing I quite agree, he has picked out the cream of the country.] In this extensive tract all the coverts are small and the fields big, so that there is ample room to get away and little chance of being left behind in the intricate sides of a dense wood. The foxes are wild, and straight of neck, too, owing to their habits of nocturnal wandering about the marshes from distant haunts. Long runs at a good pace are therefore the rule, and the land generally holds such a capital scent that hounds do not often dwell on the line. Such a country as this one would of course select in preference to the woodland tract if he wished to see hounds and horsemen at their best; but a wanderer among many hunts cannot always select his ground, especially at a time of year when a break between periods of frost has to be made the most of.

The fixture was at Billericay—not by any means the best, and certainly not the worst, trysting-place the Essex Union have. The hard frost of two or three preceding days had given place to rain, and there was so little promise of pleasant weather that a small gathering might well have been anticipated. “A favourite” meet.

February 20th, 1885. Saturday. Latchingdon.

Fine day, easterly wind, looked very much like snow early in the morning. Found in the gorse at Asheldham, and ran to ground after a quiet twelve minutes. Went back and found

again, took a line through the brick yard to the Hurdles, on to Old Moon Wood, and over the brook to Mrs. Robinson, a good thirty minutes without a check and then slow hunting for another eighteen minutes, and lost on Batts Farm. Chopped a fox in Lords Wood and went away with another up to Tathams, then to the left to the Cliffs, but turned again before getting there, over the Burnham road, leaving Baker's Grove a field on our left, then a direct line to Mayland, and lost on Mr. John Page's farm. Altogether a very good day. Carnegie unfortunately broke his collar bone when we were near Bakers Grove, and had to drive home.

February 25th. Thursday. Sandon.

Fine day, cold N.E. wind and slight frost last night, but not enough to prevent us making a move at the appointed time. First drew Flowery Wood with no result, then Chapman's Gorse, which produced the required article. It at first seemed as if there was no scent, but when hounds settled, we had a good run first to Thorny Wood and one field beyond in a westerly direction when we bore to the right and crossed the brook at the Sandon end of the piers up to the road across the Bishops Park and Chelmsford Road, through Long Spring, passing in front of Riffhams House, across a corner of Lingwood Common, through Ling Wood, and on as if for W. Water Common before getting there turned to the right through

Summan Grove, then bearing left over the road and through Ratcliff Grove, skewed across the barren farm on to W. Water Common, when hounds hunted uncommonly well, and went away on the Little Baddow side, up the hill through Long Wood into Blakes, when we got beat, having changed foxes on to W. Walter Common. Time, one hour twenty minutes. Later on we found in Woodham Hall, and started as if for the Lodge Gorse, but bearing to the right, took a line across Libcracks and over the brook to Danbury Common, where we had some slow hunting, but went on, leaving Gay Bowers on our left, again over the brook, when one noted sportsman on a grey had a thorough ducking, up to Denmain's farm, then doubled back towards Chapman's Gorse, and lost after a good hunting run of fifty-four minutes.

February 27th. Saturday. Billericay.

Fine morning, white frost, easterly wind, clouded over in the afternoon, and snowed coming home. Did not start from home till 11 a.m., thinking it too hard. Met the hounds at one o'clock, just moving off to dray Norsey; did not find till we got to Little Bishops, and had a slow hunting run with a catchy scent to Blue Hedges, on to West Hanningfield, then Pandon, back to Bishops and Forty Acres, then to Ramsden, and marched to ground under a wheat-stack on the south side of the village, one hour fifteen minutes. Trotted off to Kemble's found three foxes in the Gorse, one of which we

ran through Rettendon Shaw, down the side of the Dale Farm to Mr. Kemble's, then parallel to the Wickford road, leaving Wickford on our left, and bore right nearly to Downham Church, a long, fast seventeen minutes. A wide cast, but in all round brought us to the line, but to do no more good.

March 20th. Saturday. Billericay.

Fine day, warm, S.W. wind. Had the Annual Hunt Meeting at 10.30, and found a deficiency of £160 odd to be made up. The Master was offered £2,000 to hunt the country next season three days a week. Made a start soon after 11.30, drew Mill Hill Forty acres, and found in Bishops, but had to whip off a vixen. Afterwards found in Well Wood, and ran for forty minutes with a very bad scent by Downham and Bock Hill. Found again in Pandam and had another long dragging run to Kemble's, Wickford, More Gardens, &c., with no result.

April 10th. Saturday. Gatwick.

Fine bright morning, but turned to heavy rainstorms, and a strong, cold, westerly wind. Found in an uncultivated field at Basildon, and ran very fast for seventeen minutes to Pitsea Mill, then slow hunting for another twenty-three to North Benfleet Hall Wood, and lost. Afterwards found in Northland Wood, Laindon Hills, but could not get our fox away. Rode

home from there, twenty miles, and thoroughly wet, but Norse came home very gay. The last day out with our hounds this season.

NOTE.—I feel sure Mr. Hilton must have been very good company during his twenty miles ride. It was a most enjoyable day, in spite of the rain, the only regret being it was the last day of the season, and hunting clothes and everything connected therewith had to be put away for so many months. I once heard a very ardent sportsman remark, when saying good-night, on the last day of the season, “I wish I could go to bed and to sleep, and not wake up till the next cubbing season begins.”

November 12th. Thursday. Latchingdon.

Dull, foggy day, small field out. Found in Lyle Hall Wood, and ran with a good scent through Shoreham Hall, then bore to the left to Chas. Clarke's, on to Wrights Leys and Star Grove, and worked slowly up to Hawes Wood, time one hour fifteen minutes. Afterwards found in Wright's Leys, ran to Pantile, and back then to Fambridge Hall, over the hill to Pacefrit, on through Purleigh Round Bush, and lost by Purleigh pump, both runs being very good, and not such heavy riding as we sometimes get.

December 3rd. Thursday. Stow Bullock.

Dull, drizzling day. Found in Fambridge Hall, ran through Brook Mead to Pantile, then to Wrights Leys, by the Rise to Purleigh How Wood, where we lost, the scent being very bad. Took a line again out of Fambridge Hall by

Wright's Leys, and on towards the Round Bush Grove, and on towards Mundon, but lost before getting there. Drew Mundon Furze, and went away over the Hall Farm on to the marshes and salttings, crossed them and hunted slowly on towards Mayland, but having got so very far behind our fox in crossing the salttings, had to give it up as a bad job. Hounds worked very well, and Carnegie was full of life, and did all he could to kill his fox.

December 31st. Thursday. Latchingdon.

Fine day, westerly wind. Found at first on Batts Farm, and afterwards in the Gorse, but could not run either of them a yard. Then found in Old Moor Wood, went away over the brook at a rattling pace, down the lane towards Asheldham Rectory, then to the left over Batts Farm, through Robinson's Grove, across the Cайдge Farm to Lords Wood, past Bakers Grove, leaving that on our left, on to Tatham, over Andrew's Farm, heading to Althorne Grove, but before getting there doubled back to Mayland Church, where we had our first check, after a hard forty-seven minutes, then on again past John Page's house, over the Cайдge, and into the buildings, and killed in the adjoining field. The best day we have had.

September 16th, 1886. Thursday.

Woodham Ferris.

Dull, cloudy morning and east wind.

Went out for the first time at 7 a.m. Drew all the Woodham cocerts blank. Found a cub in Woodham Lodge Gorse, but were unable to do anything with it; then a brace in Readings Wood, which we ran about a field, the ground very hard and dry. The second whip had a bad fall over a fence, landing on his head and face through the horse not rising, and it looked like a bad job.

December 6th. Monday. Rayleigh.

Dull day, strong S.W. wind. Found in Pound Wood and ran to ground, the earths not being stopped. Found again in a hedgerow in Beak Hall, and ran across Rawreth Hall to Trundels, over Stubbers Lodge, Batts Hill, to Hockley Hall Wood, and lost in the Bull Wood. A good run in the open for about thirty-five minutes.

December 16th. Thursday. Latchingdon.

Fine bright day, and a large field out for the country. Drew Tile Hall, Althorne Grove and Freemans. Found in some cabbages, chopped one and ran the other through Althorne Grove and on to Freemans, where we hunted him for at least half an hour, and killed in the wood. Found again a brace in Snoreham Hall, and had a very good run of twenty-eight minutes fast down to the village, then back, leaving the wood on the left, two fields over Purleigh Barns to the old Church, and to ground in Tile Hall,

dug out and killed. Again found in Farnbridge Hall, ran through Brook Mead towards Wright's Leys, but bore left through Pantile to Stow Grove, over the hill through Hawes and King's Grove, down to the marshes, which we ran nearly to Green's house, then bore left to Stow Green, where we lost. A first-rate run, the first thirty-five minutes very fast, and the last ten minutes fairly good. A capital day all through.

January 20th, 1887. Thursday. Stow.

Fine day, S.W. wind, slight frost last night. Found in Farnbridge Hall, ran over Kits Hill, across Mr. Parkers farm, and back along the marshes to the wood, away again over the hill to Snoreham Hall and Tile Hall, and lost near Latchingdon Rectory. Went to Mundon Furze and had a good twenty minutes across Purleigh Burns to Farnbridge Hall, where we remained hunting in the wood for some time, but I believe eventually went away.

February 14th. Monday. Rayleigh.

Fine day, but cloudy, N.E. wind. Found three foxes in Hadleigh Wood. The pack divided and ran two of them to ground, one in the covert and one in Pound Wood. Found another in Stones Grove, which was killed at once, as it was not able to run, being so stiff from a severe hustling eight days ago. Found a third in an uncultivated field behind Gardiners

which we ran to ground under a barn, bolted it, and had a gallop over a few fields and lost. Fourteen miles to ride home, and the filly lame which Bob was riding, so had to walk most of the way.

February 21st. Monday. Hockley Bull.

Fine bright day after rain during the night. Found in the Bull Wood, and after one ring round it went away through the broom at the top, and hunted well up to Pound Wood, and eventually to ground in Hadleigh Big Wood. Found again in the Potash, first made the Bull Wood, where we hunted about for some time, and then went away towards Rayleigh, bore left to Hadleigh, through that, and Killed close to Leigh; or rather, a seafaring man shot our fox as the hounds were running into it.

March 10th. Thursday. Grays.

Fine bright day, cold N.E.E. wind. Drew the Danbury coverts, Thrift, Hyde and Slough Woods; found in Woodham Hall, and had a long slow hunting run of two and a half hours, hounds working very well, to the Gorse, Reedings Wood, on to Rettendon Bell, then Square Grove, New Wood, Hounden, Pandam, Little Bishop, Great Bishop, then back through Little Bishops nearly to Well Wood, where we gave up.

February 9th, 1888. Thursday.

Woodham Ferris.

Fine, bright day, westerly wind. Found in Embersons, ran through Squeaking Gate and New England, round by the Slough to the Corporation Wood, then again through Squeaking Gate and the Hall Wood, Fauxes, New England, and or to Embersons, where we killed. Fifty-two minutes. Found next in Hawes, and ran fast along the brow of the hill through Caney Wood and killed close to the "Rise." Fifteen minutes. Found in Pantile, ran down to Bashalts, then left to Cambridge Hall, to Brook Mead Grove, and back to Pantile and lost again in Wrights Leys, and killed after about ten minutes. Then trotted to Mundon Furze and had the best run of the day through Purleigh Wash Grove, then fast up to Hazeleigh Hall, through it, and over the brook to Lunbourne Brook, then turned sharp to the right, over the line, crossed the road by Jenkins Farm, and on to the Furze, where he was marked to ground after heavy going all day. A good field out.

March 8th. Thursday. Latchingdon.

Dull day, cloudy and drizzling at times. Found in Althorne Grove and killed a field from the covert. Then found in Batts Farm, ran towards Asheldham as far as Dennis's, when we turned sharp to the right to Southminster, over the Caidges Farm to John Page's, on to Althorn



MRS. TAWKE, AGED 93, who gives an account of run.

Grove and Kemps Grove, and killed on Lyle Hall Farm. A good forty-seven minutes. Found again at Mundon Furze, started towards Ittney, then ran nearly to Maldon, but bore to the left west through Hazeleigh Hall, on by Hanging Wood, through the Corporation Wood, New England and Squeaking Gate, where we lost after an hour and twelve minutes. Heavy going all day. A good field out.

March 29th. Thursday. Stow Bullocks.

Fine bright morning, S.W. wind, rained heavily in the afternoon. Found in Wright's Leys, ran through Pantile, across the Morris Farm, over Austin, and up the hill to Carey Wood, then on to Partridge Farm, Dobsons and Hove Wood, where we lost; slow hunting run. Found again in Mundon Furze and had a very good run and fast over Bolts and Freeman's Farms to the Round Bush Grove, under the line, up to Purleigh Hall, and down to Holts Grove, twenty-seven minutes; then on to Hazeleigh Hall, thirty-three minutes; over the brook out of the Ten acres, on to and through our wood, through the further end of the osiers, and over the Little Grange Farm to the Hydes, where we lost in a very heavy shower. Time altogether, one hour; the first twenty-seven minutes very good.

November 8th. Thursday. Stow Bullocks.

Fine day, misty, cold easterly wind. Found

in Pantile, ran to Brook Mead, up to Norton Hall, where the fox was headed and went back by Wright's Leys to Norton Rectory, on to and through The Grove, over the line to the Morris Farm, and ran the road to Bashalts, then back across a meadow towards Greens, and killed in a hedgerow; time forty-five minutes. Then went to Fambridge, and after a long turn in the Court, ran up towards Chas. Clarke's and over Kits Hill, where we lost in crossing a heavy plough, so went on to Mundon, went away over Meads Farm, over the brook towards the Stud Farm, crossed the road between Jenkyns and Maldon, on by a circular route to Hazeleigh Hall, straight through the wood, and out over our Mill Field and front meadow, through the garden, then right across the farm up to Lloyds fields, to Hazeleigh Common, where we bore to the right to the Place, and on past Speakmans to the Wilderness, and to Walter Rectory, where we lost, scent failing after a good hunting run of one hour and forty minutes, hounds and horses having had quite enough.

This was another excellent day, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

January 2nd, 1889, was a rare good hunting day, and, taken as a whole, one of the best I have seen. The scent was so good—one of those days when hounds seem as if they must keep on the line. The Meet was at South Hanningfield, and the first fox was found in Hondan. We ran over a beautiful line of country to Woodham, and killed near Squeaking Gate.

The second fox was found in Moor Gardens, went away on the north side to Fox Earth, Well Wood to Pandam, and on to the Glebe, where he was lost.

I was riding a most perfect hunter called Cypriop, and thoroughly enjoyed both runs.

The clanging horn swells its sweet winding notice,
The pack, wide opening, load the trembling air
With various melody.

January 15th. Meet: Shepherd and Dog.

Found in Stone's Grove; went away at a great pace, running for thirty minutes in the direction of Laindon, when the fox turned down wind; hounds hunted well back to Wickford Bridge, where they killed, after an hour and twenty minutes. Crays Wood was drawn, a fox found, ran through Misses Hole, Forty Acres, on to Lilley Stones, through Long Wood, nearly to the Forest, and back to ground in Swan Wood; time, one hour and three minutes.

NOTE.—Mr. Hilton says only four saw the run, namely, himself, Colonel Kemble, Mr. C. Parker and George Rae. The rest of the field were thrown out through the gates being locked and did not get a look in till Swan Wood.

January 24th. Thursday. Stow Bullocks.

Fine day, foggy in the morning. Went straight off to Mundon Furze to start with, but found nothing at home, then drew Snoreham

Hall and on to Farnbridge ; found and ran up to Norton Hall and threw up. Afterwards found in Caming Wood, ran along the hill side eastward, bearing right by Norton Rectory, through Wrights Leys to a drain by Norton Hall, going a good pace over the grass and washed him out from there, ran towards Kits Hill and down the road into Farnbridge Hall, out at the other end, past the Rectory towards the Hall Farm, then a ring round the marshes to the left, and to ground on Kits Hill ; dug out and killed.

NOTE.—I remember seeing the fox emerge from Mr. Clarke's drain looking such a poor, miserable, saturated little object—it took an enormous amount of water to dislodge him, and the drains must have been so well cleaned out they could have required no more cleaning for years.

January 29th. Tuesday. Stock Ship.

Dull, wet day, S.W. wind. Found in Temple Grove and ran with a very poor scent to Sir Hughes at Great Baddow, but could not make anything more of it. Found again in Long Wood, and had a very nice run of an hour, good hunting through Cockshill Wood, on over Crondon Park to the Forest, where we had a slight check, then over the road to Fox-burrow wood, through that and Stock Ship, over Galley wood, and past Markham Barnards house, leaving it on our right, and on to the Beehive Farm on the Baddow Road ; killed in the wood close by. A very enjoyable day, although so wet.

February 14th. Thursday. Rettendon Bell.

Dull, showery day, S.W. wind. Found near Square Grove, ran up to the old Rettendon Mill and back to Square Grove, then down by the Rectory and towards Battlesbridge. About fifty minutes; very little scent indeed. Then found in Kemble's Gorse, ran through New Wood to Rettendon Common, across to the brick kilns, to Scrub Wood, on to Well Wood and Cock Wood, and lost in Beaver Wood. Thirty-five minutes very fair run. A very small field out, not more than twelve. I suppose the snow of late prevented more from turning up, but the snow had all vanished.

Charles Tabor called on his way to Rettendon, and came galloping up to the house, cracking his whip as no one else has cracked a whip in the County since: "Put your habit on at once; I have ordered your horse—Not fit to hunt?—of course it is"; and as no one ever dreamt of disputing his commands, off I went to dress, and we were soon jogging along the slushy roads, and glad enough, I recall the fact, that I did go out that day. We had a thoroughly enjoyable run. The ditches were rather full of the melting snowy water. Charles Tabor and Treacle managed to subside into one of these as we were crossing Crows Heath, and it took him some time to emerge, and at one moment it seemed probable that Treacle would have to be dug out. Fortunately the run was nearly over by that time, and Charles Tabor being wet through, we said good-night and went off home.

February 21st. Thursday. Rettendon Bell.

Dull, stormy day, northerly wind, cold snow storms. Found in Embersons, but got on to heel line, then went away from Jackets, through Squeaking Gate to Rank Wood, over Flamberts Farm to Corporation Farm, doubled over Walton Hall and Dobson's Farm, down by the Rise at Norton, with a trace of foxes in front of us and into Wright Leys, where we were unable to make anything of it, then put up a fox by Brookmead Grove, ran it across the Rookery Farm and into Fambridge Hall Wood, out again, over the road without dwelling, and up to Norton Hall, and on towards the Three Ashes, but was headed back on the top of the hill to Wright's Leys, and went to ground in earth; dug out and killed.

March 4th. Monday. North Benfleet Pump.

Fine bright day, sharp frost last night, N.E. to S.E. winds. Found when we got to the Meet that hounds were not coming out on account of frost, but would go out later if anyone went to the Kennels. We then rode on there, four Kembles and two selves, and picked up Marshall, found Carnegie and got him to come out at about one p.m. Drew Mups Hole and Crags Hill, and found in Forty Acres, ran the whole length of the wood and on to Little and Great Bishops, then away for Stock, past Lillystones, through Whiteswood and heading for Rook Wood, when the fox was viewed about

two fields from the brook, made a right turn up through Long Wood, then through Turk's Wood, over Webster's Farm, round by Swan Wood, and killed in Turk's Wood. One hour and three minutes nice hunting run, only about ten people out, and well repaid for our trouble in going to the Kennels.

March 14th. Thursday. W. M. Oak.

Cloudy day, with sun at intervals and a little drizzle in the afternoon. Cold northerly wind. Found in the Hyde Woods, ran one to ground and another up to Danbury, over the Common, across the brook to Chapman's Gorse, on to Slough Wood, then Hanging Wood and Hazeleigh Hall, back to Hanging Wood, where we lost, the hounds having divided. Time, one hour and ten minutes. Found again later in Mundon Furze, ran by Purleigh Wash, through the Wash Grove to Hazeleigh Hall Wood, then back over Jenkins and the Stud Farm to the Furze, but lost before getting there; time forty-five minutes. Galloping all day and quite enough for horses, the scent at the first being good.

March 28th. Thursday. Latchingdon.

Fine, bright day, westerly wind. Found in Althorne Grove, ran fast through Kemps Grove and over the hill to Althorne Church, where it was more or less all up. Drew Lords Wood, and found in the Gorse, ran down to

Dengie and along below Tillingham to Marks Farm, and to ground in a polar dtree ; got him out and went merrily for five or ten minutes, and again to ground in a bank on Mark Farm, from which we got him out and killed, an old dog fox. A large field out and several from the East Essex country, forming a goodly throng. If I mistake not, amongst them were the Colvins, Mr. and Mrs. Luke Hill,—he is High Sheriff this year— and Mrs. Townsend—always such excellent company. I only wish her health would allow her to come out with us now.

ESSEX UNION POINT TO POINT STEEPLECHASES.

On Tuesday, April 9th the steeplechase of this Hunt came off at Laindon. The Master had selected a capital course on Mr. Harrison's land. The line was of an oblong form, extending from Great Gubbins to Wootton's Farm, parallel to the Tilbury railway, a liberal four miles, nearly all grass, with fair hunting fences. There were seven entries for the Subscribers' race. Mr. Secretary did not run his black horse ; indeed, rumour suggested that his horse had abandoned the chase for a melancholy calling especially suited to his speed and colour. Dr. Marshall jumped off with the lead, which he retained almost to the end, on Mr. Jones' "Nobility," closely followed by Mr. Stallibrass on his horse, "Fisherman," and Mr. Blackburn's "Morning Glory," ridden by Mr. Tippler, while

the van was composed of Mr. Landen's "Parchment," with Mr. Payne up, Mr. Russell's two horses, and Miss Tawke's "Conspiracy," ridden by Mr. Manley Baker. With the last-named gradually drawing up to the leading two, when three parts of the course had been completed, it was evident that an interesting race would follow. The last two fences were in and out of the lane leading to Laindon Church, and from the winning field it looked as if all four horses were in the lane together, but here Morning Glory blundered, almost coming down, and Mr. Tippler lost a stirrup, and, after an exciting finish that is not often witnessed at the end of a four miles cross country race, Conspiracy just won by a neck from Morning Glory, Fisherman, barely a length behind, third, and old Nobility, close up, fourth, Parchment next, and the other two horses completing the course. The Farmers' Race also produced seven starters. Mr. Stallibrass, on his horse, Nebuchadnezzar, cut out the work for the great part of the race, with Mr. Goodchild on his chestnut mare, "Countess," and Mr. Payne on Mr. Rogers' mare, "Radwintee," in close attendance; at a short interval came Mr. Richardson's "Peter," ridden by Mr. Blyth, Mr. Blackburn on his "General," Mr. Gardner's "Tormentor," ridden by Mr. Hilliard, and Mr. Davis's horse, which fell early in the race. Half a mile from the winning field Nebuchadnezzar had shot his bolt, and the race seemed to lay between Countess and Radwinter, when, just before reaching the last obstacle, Peter, coming along

with a wet sail, collared them both, and won the cup and £20 by a length from Countess, Radwinter being a good third, the three remaining horses passing the post not far behind. Both victories were most popular. Mr. Carnegie has no keener follower, and few ride straighter to hounds than Miss Tawke, and it was a really good performance of the little mare to carry 3 stone 7 lbs. in excess of the weight she was accustomed, and win in such company. Mr. Richardson, too, is a pillar of strength to the Hunt in the Woodham country, where the cup he won will doubtless be the medium of wishing success to for hunters for some time to come.

“CONSPIRACY.”

The mare, Conspiracy, was not what you would describe as the pleasantest of hunters. At times she was a brilliant performer, and you could depend on her to carry you well in front in the fastest of runs. She could gallop, but unfortunately Conspiracy had her bad days. Perhaps when you least expected she would land on her head at the easiest of places, and if she started like that you might be pretty sure she would go on making mistakes all day; and so it was a tremendous surprise when she won the cup which has stood on the middle of my dining room table ever since.

Training Conspiracy was an occupation which entirely met with my approval.

Every day Manley Baker, mounted on the mare, and myself on Tiger (some one asked a friend of mine if this horse, Tiger, could jump). "Jump? I should say he can; he can climb a tree or go down a well." But there was one thing Tiger could not bear, and that was a plain, simple hurdle; he would sooner push his way through the blackest and ugliest of fences before he would jump a hurdle, and many a time I have been simply furious—he would canter up: when I thought I was going all right, he would stand still and with his head hanging over the top—and yet such a horse to ride through a run I have never known; nothing tired him. He knew all about hunting, and turned with hounds like a knife, and he was always right. It was a pleasure to stand at the corner of a covert waiting for the fox to break. I knew at once when the fox was away; he caught sight of him long before I did, and he would keep as still as a mouse till hounds were well on the line; then away he went with a bound, and I don't think it would have been an easy job to stop him.

But, to go back to Conspiracy: Tiger rather looked down on her performance, but he did his best to help her. The time I write of was twenty-two years ago, when there was only one house between Hockley House and Stone's shop, and we could scamper over the fields and fences as we pleased; and from Hockley Hall Wood to Murrel's Farm there was nothing but big, black fences. Manley Baker was always considered a first-rate man on a horse, and there is no doubt about it: he rode the race well.

December 23rd. Monday. Burnham.

Fine, bright, warm day, westerly wind. Hounds came down by train. Drew Lords Wood, and found a good fox, which gave us an hour's gallop; went away on the Burnham side of the road, then bore right to Baker's Grove, right again, heading for John Page's, over the Cайдge Farm to Mr. Robinson's Grove, over the road up to Dennis's Farm, then down to Asheldham Bridge, up the road, then left to Old More, up at the back of Jack Page's house and through Frank Page's garden, tried the earth on the other side of the road, then on to the West Old More, but finding that too hot, made back to the earth by the road-side, where we killed. The first half-hour very good indeed. Found afterwards a brace in the Gorse, but could not make anything of it.

January 18th, 1890. Saturday. Billericay.

Fine day, cold S.W. wind. Found in Norsey Wood, and ran down to White Bridge and on to Noak Wood, where we marked a fox to ground, but I believe not our hunted one; dug him out, and had a good run from here of forty-five minutes, and almost a straight line through Stone's Grove and over a nice bit of country to Thundersley, and lost when we got to the road by Mr. Belcham's house, just going into Rayleigh.



MR. CHARLES TABOR ON TREACLE, PAGE 43, VOL 1.

January 30th. Thursday. Bicknace.

Fine day after rain during the night; N.W. wind. Drew the Though and Hydes without finding. Found in our wood, ran across to Hazeleigh Hall, and nearly twice round the wood, then broke towards the Box Iron, on to Hanging Wood, over Burchwood Farm by the marsh pits and heading as if for the Slough Wood, but turned to the right and was run into one field from the West Hyde; time, thirty-six minutes. We afterwards found in New England, ran up through Squeaking Gate, then back and through the Hall Wood, over Woodham Lodge Farm, across Plgaes and the Rettendon Farm (Parkers), then back by Hyde Hall, over the Hyde Hall, over the hill by Woodham, on by Embersons, where we had some pretty music for several minutes, then away on the track of the foxes through Squeaking Gate, New England, Fawkes and into Woodham Hall, where hounds were completely puzzled and lost their fox. Altogether a nice run of one hour thirty-six minutes.

February 18th. Monday. Shepherd and Dog.

Fine, bright day, frost in morning, easterly wind. Picked up a fox on our way back to Noak Wood with a snare on; dispatched that, and did not find in the wood. Sent one off a hedgerow near Moor Gardens, which went into and through the wood nearly to Rettendon Church, then turned sharp back to the right through Flemings Wood, then Well and Cocks

Wood, on to Misses Hole, Crays Wood and Norsey, down by Gatwick, and again through Crays Wood, where I left them as they were not doing much, but the first part of the run was fairly good. Carnegie had a fall, his horse coming over backwards at an uphill jump, and one man, a friend of Hapthams, broke his horse's back—so it appeared at the time, but I heard afterwards that it was a fit, and that the horse got all right again.

NOTE.—I saw Mr. Carnegie's horse in the ditch just off the Grange Downham, from the take-off side. Only the horse's ears were visible. Besides being an uphill jump, with the ditch—a very deep one—on the landing side, and the bank level with the line, I always consider it to be one of the nastiest fences in the Essex Union country. Taken the other way about, though a very deep drop, it is not nearly so disagreeable.

October, 1891.

Few persons remember it is only by the goodness of the farmers that we ride over the land at all. And if the hunting world would only recognise this fact and let it be seen by the farmers that they do so, there would be less friction. Personally I have always met with the greatest courtesy, but then I think I may say I have always felt the deep obligation we owe to the farmers and landowners whose land we cross, and I have often wondered how they put up so patiently with crowds of persons tearing

across their land as though the whole place belonged to them. Only a few days ago a fellow worker of mine was deplored how thoughtless the hunting men are, and he got insufficient support to keep up the wire fund he had worked so hard to raise.

Talking of wire, the first time I heard of such a thing was in a letter from Captain White, telling me the astounding news of Bashall Farm, Woodham (over which we had enjoyed so many good runs) falling into the hands of a man who had wired up every fence, and made a regular bird cage of the place.

Shortly after, one warm sunny day, we had come to a check on the grass hill behind the buildings. Up came the occupier, and after a shower of abuse, he addressed himself principally to Mr. Oxley Parker (he was High Sheriff that year), and the wrathful man little knew that he was addressing the greatest man for the time being in the County. "And as for you," he said, "you, the oldest of the lot, ought to be ashamed of yourself." Mr. Parker only beamed on him, as though our irate friend was saying everything that was courteous and pleasant.

It is comforting to know that after many years the farm is in the hands of a real sportsman. Not only has the way been made easy for us, but, better still, Mr. Hollington hunts himself.

Mr. Parker and my father were at the same school, and boys were not fed as they are now. My father used to tell us how hungry the boys

were, they were glad to catch mice and roast them in the candle. I am bound to say neither of them had the appearance of having been starved in their youth. The friendship, began over the roast mouse suppers, continued until my father's death.

At Laindon Hills there was an irate farmer. He was standing on a bank, ready with his gun to stop any one of the field who might venture over the fence. "I shall shoot the first man who comes." A young barrister (now a Judge—I wonder if he remembers the incident?) riding one of Mulvaney's hirelings known as "Patent Safety," thus addressed him.

"Ah, my good man, you want to shoot? You can start on me. Now then, shoot away."

The man was so taken aback, all his anger and importance passed away.

"Come on," he said, "I don't mind you, and such as you may go where you like." The last we saw of him was in the most friendly conversation with the Barrister from town.

Another incident of the same sort took place near Tile Wood, Hadleigh. A gallant sportsman was pursued by the angry owner armed with a pitchfork, who called out to a boy who was with him, "Shut the gate, boy, we have got one of them."

He was rather taken aback when his prisoner quietly turned his horse round and was over the fence by the side before the would-be jailor had time to say "knife." He had quite overlooked the fact that the man and horse he had to deal with were hard to beat over any

country, and stiff indeed must be the fence to stop that pair.

On another occasion, living on the edge of a wood, whose yard we constantly pass through, we found him in furious altercation with a local tradesman, whom he refused to allow to pass through his gate, and we were all kept prisoners. At last I went to him and asked permission to come out. "Yes, yes, you can come," and he let several of us through, but the tradesman had to retire defeated, the farmer explaining, "I don't mind the head 'uns, like you; but ting-tang things like he I won't have through my place for anybody."

Once at Cold Norton some people from Maldon hired a few acres of land and most annoying they were one day when hounds were running hard, they came out with sticks and stopped the entire field; but one of our party, more diplomatic than the rest, produced golden ointment which quickly appeased their wrath, and we were allowed to proceed. I believe the gentlemen were retired sweeps—at least, so I was told.

FOX IN A BOX.

I was going one morning to meet the hounds at Billericay, and, as I had often done before, I took a fox in a box (at the time I speak of foxes ran about the Bull Woods like mice, and the Master was glad to make

sure of a run for a Saturday field).

There was a fresh ticket boy at Hockley Station, and he had not got accustomed to my ways. He said, "You have got to pay for this." I replied, "No, it is my personal luggage." "Well," he answered, "*its alive.*"

"MISS GRACE."

One of the best hunters I have had was a little grey mare called Grace. I picked her up for a mere song. She belonged to a local butcher, and was too gay to carry the meat out on his rounds in safety. He bought her at Aldridge's—she had been too much for her former owner. Soon after I had her I discovered what a real good sort she was, but she required understanding. I found a noseband which shut off the wind most useful. After a few seasons I could hold her with a thread, but though it was quite loose Grace knew in a moment if the noseband had been left off.

Grace was one of the most wonderful stayers I ever came across; she was only 14-2, and the butcher used to win all the little local races with her. I used to ride her with the Stag Hounds, and if I shook her up I knew I could pass almost anything out; she bounded over the biggest places as though they were gutters.

During the first summer the butcher and his friends came and asked me if I could lend her to them to pull off the local races as usual. No doubt I was to "stand in," but I declined

with thanks. Grace was just losing all her nasty little tricks—and she *had some*. I rode her for several seasons, and then she became a victim to rheumatism, and, much to my regret, I was obliged to give up riding her.

She now lies buried in the gravel pit with several other of my other favourites; but before she went to her long rest she had several foals. One was a beauty, just like herself; she was broken in at home, as were all our young horses, and when she was supposed to be fit for me to ride, one fine spring morning I went out alone with her into the Bull Woods. I walked up and down path after path, and was just considering how very comfortably we were getting on together, when a bird flew up; the mare gave a bound, and off came my hat, and, as luck and carelessness would have it, the guard was too long and the hat bumped on her back; off she tore, entirely regardless of paths; on she went, straight through the high wood, as fast as she could go, with my hat dangling on her back all the way. As long as I live I shall never forget that ride. We got to the edge of the wood at last, and I managed to guide her into a swampy lane, where she was up to her knees in mud and was obliged to come to a standstill. There I found two boys gazing at the spectacle I presented; from them I borrowed a knife and cut off the hat which had done all the mischief, and proceeded to turn the mare back into the wood, and walked slowly home. All went well till we got into the meadow; then she took the bit in her teeth, and away she went straight to the

stable-yard. Mercifully she turned into the yard in safety, and still more fortunately the stable door was closed. My groom heard us coming, and in his fright shut himself in the harness room, fearing what he might see. My face was streaming with blood.

The result of this incident was my people made me promise not to mount the mare again, and so I was obliged to let her go.

BUSVINE'S HABITS.

I must now say a word or two in praise of Busvine's habits. I believe I am right in surmising, the excellent safety skirt invented by that firm was mainly due to an accident which occurred to my cousin. She was following her husband, and in jumping a fence she was swept out of the saddle by a branch. Her husband, quite unconscious of what had happened, was riding on ahead. Just as he was getting to the next fence, he looked back, and to his horror saw his wife hanging from her saddle, head downwards. She was taken to a farmhouse, where she remained for ten weeks in a most critical condition, and with three doctors in attendance. I can vouch for the safety and comfort which is derived by wearing Busvine's habits.



MY COUSIN'S PERILOUS POSITION.

LADIES' SADDLES.

I consider Messrs. Champion & Wilton's saddles are quite the most comfortable, and if you have one of their foremen down to point out to your groom the exact spot where the saddle should be placed, you stand very little chance of a sore back; and with the patent stirrup it is most unlikely you will find yourself in the very undesirable position of hanging head downwards if your horse makes a mistake.

Before all these comforts of safety stirrups and patent skirts were invented, Charles Tabor used to say, "It's fortunate you have a tidy pair of boots; I see them nearly as often as your hat." And his remark brings me to the subject of boots. I can safely say, nothing can compare with the comfort of Messrs. Bartley's boots; if you get a pinch in a gateway or against a tree, you never see mto feel it.

HUNTING HATS.

There can be but one opinion of the hats made by Messrs. Robert Heath & Co., of Knightsbridge—they don't come off at the first fence, and you don't get a headache.

One's comfort is very much increased by getting clothes from establishments where they thoroughly understand the business.

LONG HAT GUARDS.

A gentleman I was once teaching to ride did not understand when I told him how dangerous it was to have too long a hat guard. One day his horse gave a jump ; off went his hat and bumped on the horse's back, with the result that up went her heels, and off went the rider over her head.

I never forget the first time he jumped a fence. I cantered down a field in front of him, very well knowing the horse he was riding would follow mine anywhere ; but, to my horror, when I looked round, there he was flat on the ground in the middle of the road, and the mare standing looking at him in the greatest surprise. He did not get up for some moments, and I feared the worst. One thing I was certain he would say : “No more jumping for me !” but he didn’t. When at last he discovered the fact that he *was* lying in the middle of the road, he merely said, “I am rather glad ; it is a new experience.” But I *was* angry with him once ; when we were in the middle of a good run, he not only fell off, but pulled the bridle off at the same time.

1877.

HER MAJESTY'S HOUNDS IN THE
COTTESMORE COUNTRY.(Taken from *The Field*).

Ever since the days of the great Meynall, Leicestershire has been considered to be first and foremost of all other counties when considered as a district suited for fox-hunting. Its prestige has been sustained up to the present day in that respect, although it has laboured under many difficulties. At one time the plough threatened to invade the "Siberian waste of grass"; iron in another form is at this moment putting its unwelcome mark upon the country in the form of many, and—as sportsmen think—uncalled for railways. Racing masters of hounds, political masters of hounds, many other varieties of M.F.H.'s., have all had a share in letting the glories of the Shires diminish; still, like a phoenix, Leicestershire raises her head after each apparently extinguishing blow, and the conclusion at which we arrive, is that there are worse places from which to hunt than Melton.

But it is as a fox-hunting country that the reputation of Leicestershire has been made. Harriers are unknown in the county, though by means of earnest research I discovered that a pack of harriers had once, in the dark ages, existed somewhere near Melton; but to whom

they belonged, or what they did, and where they hunted, seemed to be circumstances so buried in oblivion that your Commissioner was fain to give up his inquiries on that subject in despair—despair mitigated by the reflection that his present mission was to describe the pursuit of another animal than *Lepus timidus*—an animal with which “timidus” has nothing in common, saving a posthumous connection with the currant jelly pot—and so to business.

Whose fertile brain first suggested a stag hunt in the Melton country this deponent sayeth not, for the very best of good reasons. However, a stag hunt is now a *fait accompli*, and with it we have to deal for the edification of future generations. How the idea originated remains at present a mystery. Still a notion was widely disseminated that a *chasse au cerf* would be a desirable finish to an unusually severe season. At first (as I am informed) there was a notion that Lord Wolverton would import his blood hounds, and so give the gilded youths of Melton one more chance of breaking those necks by which they appear to set so little store. But that idea fell through, not unreasonably, as the blood hounds had been enjoying a long holiday, their master having spent most of the season at Melton, and any collision between them and the “customers” was considered undesirable. Then came, so I am told, a suggestion in which the pack of harriers and a deer figured harriers to be imported from a neighbouring country. This notion also fell through; and if the Master of the said harriers

values them at all, he is rather a subject to congratulation. Fancy harriers with a fragrant stag before them, and Melton—well, I won't say behind, but rather on top of them.

“A different hound,” says Somerville, “for different chases select,” or words to that effect; but in his day the hound had only to consider the game in front of him. Now his thoughts are divided: for if he has any instinct of self-preservation, the customer behind must command a certain amount of his attention. So the harrier idea was abandoned, and for a time no stag hunt loomed in the future. However, Lord Hardwicke came to the rescue, and only asking that the hunt servants should be mounted, volunteered to bring down Her Majesty's hounds and deer, and solve the long unanswered problem as to whether the Melton district is a good stag-hunting country. The eccentric Lord Waterford used, when at Losely to run red deer from time to time with a pack which were not very particular about what might be before them, as may be inferred from the fact that they once had a capital gallop after the village parson, whose pony's feet had been surreptitiously perfumed with aniseed. In later days, on the Donnington side of the Quorn country, the late Marquis of Hastings used to have an occasional stag hunt with the harriers which he kept before taking the Quorn hounds, but it does not appear that he did particularly well at that game; and with these exceptions, stag hunting has always been, from one cause or another, as rigorously excluded from Leicester-

shire as Don Giovanni and Leporello would have been from a young ladies seminary at Clapham, the mistress of which knew the gentlemen in question and their peculiar idiosyncrasies. However, stag hounds have now had, like other dogs, their day, and this day has to be chronicled.

The present winter has been a most trying one to everybody. From the swell whose stud of priceless nags has been put *hors de combat* by the deep ground, to the city clerk whose accounts for omnibus fares on rainy days form a prominent item, all sorts and conditions of men have suffered from the continued down-pour—excepting perhaps Club hall porters, who never leaving their posts are presumably independent of weather. Well, everyone thought Jupiter Pluvis, after such an innings would have been content; but no! on Tuesday night he began again, and what between him and Aquarius, half the low grounds were under water on Tuesday. Rivers were great locustrine districts; brooks, rivers; ditches were brooks; furrows ditches, and so on. A sort of general brevet had gone forth promoting every obstacle in which water had a share. All this was against stag hunting, as a deer generally is no more fond of deep going than a horse, and being (unlike the latter) free to choose his own course, is not unlikely to leave the fields and betake himself to a friendly road and follow it for miles, to the joy of the funkers, the discomfiture of the hounds, and the disappointment of the hard riders. Yes, there is an uncertainty

even in the delights of stag hunting. There are very few "morals" going nowadays (in any sense of the word), and those who get hold of them are usually ungenerous enough to keep the knowledge of them strictly to themselves; let us hope that such selfishness will never prosper.

These and many other such thoughts chased each other through your Commissioner's brain, as he proceeded to Barleythorpe on Tuesday, April 10th. "Water, water everywhere," after the night's rain; but the rest of the quotation would have been singularly inappropriate, as, on arrival at the meet, it became obvious to the meanest capacity that no man, thanks to Lord Lonsdale's hospitality, need go away either thirsty or fasting. The morning was very warm, and after a gallop of several miles to the fixture, a glass of champagne cup was by no means a thing to be despised; in fact, it came as natural as it does in the five minutes of excitement preparatory to the start of the Ascot Cup. What reminds us of Ascot, I wonder? Ah, of course, Lord Hardwicke, with green coat and golden couples. And now let us look at the pack and their attendants. Fourteen and a half couples "mixed" are the hounds, and a mixed pack never, unless in a five days a week establishment, looks quite level. Out of sixty couple, a huntsman can select little dogs and bitches to run together, with the admirable results seen in the Belvoir country. Connoisseurs also criticise the hounds as being fat. Well, they are fatter than fox hounds

usually are; but they are not going to hunt a fox. We shall see presently what they can do. Now look at the officials and their remarkably splendid dress. I always admire the dress of the Queen's hunt servants. It is not that I have not seen many fine clothes in the course of a rather long, and I trust not altogether ill-spent existence.

Suffice it to say that all Melton was there with the exception of Lord Grey de Wilton (on the sick list); all the Cottesmore Hunt; all Mr. Tailby's champions, led by himself, whilst a special train brought those Quornites whose lines have fallen on the Forest side. Of ladies there are many. Shall we try and name them? Lady Wilton, Lady Florence Dixie, Lady Grey de Wilton, Mrs. Younger, Mrs. C. Chaplin, Mrs. Molyneaux, Miss Elmhurst, Mrs. Featherston Dilke, Miss Dixie, Mrs. Featherstonhaugh, Misses Markham (2), Mrs. Tryon, Mrs. Henry, Miss Paget, Mrs. Candy, Mrs. Stanley, Miss Chaplin, and no end of others. Now there is a stir in the crowd, the deer cart appears, not unlike a station omnibus, barring the colour, with a verderer upon the box, whose costume of bright green velvet confers dignity upon the otherwise almost homely-looking vehicle. After the fashion of the Horse Artillery's "Halt," "Action front," the deer cart presents its latter end to the country, its face to the field; the door opens, and out he comes. He is by name the Baron—a noted red deer. Looking with ill-concealed contempt upon the assemblage, and cutting his old friend the verderer dead, the

Baron trots off, looking rather rudely from side to side, with an expression which clearly states his opinion that the present company is not good enough for him. An open gate lets him out of the first field; the next is bounded by a fair hunting fence. Approaching it no faster than he would do if his intention were to browse upon it, he makes a half halt, and as we wonder what his game is, he rises in the air like a rocket and vanishes over the hedge. Now commences a stampede. Down the road go traps of all descriptions encircled by crowds of excited and incompetent horsemen. A gold-laced official follows the stag, and his mission is a subject of great speculation amongst the populace. He does nothing much, however, and at length stands still, the centre of an awe-struck and admiring crowd, *omne ignotum pro magnifico*. At length and at last the hounds are laid on, and something less than a score of horsemen start with them. The rest are staring at the yeoman pricker, or whatever the man may be called who has been, as it were, wishing the deer bon voyage. As a rule the hounds are stopped at the place where the deer has showed his heels to the official; but on this occasion, plenty of law having been given, and scent seeming indifferent (indeed, the ground was foiled with hares and sheep, besides horses), hounds went on, and the fun began.

Two or three friendly gates produced competition rather than politeness. A fair stake-and-bound fence, however, put matters a little to rights; and Lord Carington sets a good

example by jumping some rails by a gate which is being opened, the hounds running on at a fair pace, and with more music in one field than the Meynell Ingram hounds or Belvoir bitches would show forth in a season. Some say that tail hounds have no business to throw their tongues; but to-day we had fourteen and a half couple, all told, and they probably all felt the scent. This sort of thing goes on for a long time, the next object of interest being one of Her Majesty's men rolling his gold lace in the mud, but a rustic catches his horse, and though apparently the worse, he progresses gamely. Ranksborough is on our right, and a nasty scramble into, and a nastier flounder out of, a strip of plantation, lands us in an immense grass field studded with ant-hills, below Overton Park Wood. A semi-check hit off by the hounds, and down the hill we rattle. The fence at the bottom is vulgarity personified! an overflowed ditch to yon, a bit of bank too narrow for a horse to "double" off, and a stake-and-bound fence beyond. Sir John Kaye, on a neat little brown horse, flies the lot—it is clearly practicable, though unpleasant. "Come up horse," we are well over; and with a rush like that of a round shot, a young lady charges the fence, and lands by our side. The majority diverge, but on go the hounds. Not carrying a head, though—not running "frantic for blood"—but going along with their heads in the air, and (may we suggest such a notion?) tailing a bit—yes, tailing, as we leave a wood (Chesildene's Coppice, I'm told) on the right, but running merrily down a hill



MRS. BENSON ON BULLY, PAGE 57, VOL. I.

beyond. The first flight with red faces and sobbing horses—for the ground is deeper than it is possible to realise that grass can be—swoop down to an overflowed brook. Well, when all Melton and all “Tailbyshire” turn away from a place it may be considered objectionable. Is it wise then for a lady, however brave, to charge an obstacle which has been avoided by good men and true? “But then these charming women will do just as they please,” says the songster. A few moments of anxiety, a very drenched habit and etceteras, and no harm done, luckily! Meanwhile, the hounds have shot ahead, Launde Abbey being left to the right; the deer goes into but immediately emerges from Launde Wood. Here a few hounds slipped their companions, so a check is caused some way beyond the wood and opposite Belton. Who is there with the hounds? It is invidious to name names no doubt! Still, for the information of future ages, we will look round and count noses. Fifty minutes up to now, and over eight miles from point, let alone the angle formed by running up to Langham and turning thence to the left. Well, who is here? Mrs. Dilke and Miss Dixie, the noble Master, Goodall, one whip, Lords Averdone and Carrington, Messrs. Samuda, Fludyer, Creyke, Powell and Parker, Captains Boyce, Coventry, Candy, Kings, Atkinson and Ashton, and indeed the list is swelling each moment, for the hounds are really in a difficulty now. A holloa is heard in the distance, but the huntsman ignoring it, casts to the left and back, then down

the hill to the right with no result. A whip has careered away meanwhile towards the holloa, and succeeds in stopping the hounds which had slipped on. Meanwhile, up come the second horses and the tail generally. On again though at a much reduced pace, below Belton, and so for Allerton. The deer has run the Uppingham road for a bit, but deserts it gain. By Ayston, with more holloaing than hunting, and at last, and for the first time since the start, the deer is viewed by the pursuing horsemen. He takes matters easily enough, though running on for Glaston. Here the huntsmen being away for a minute, Lord Hardwicke takes hold of the hounds, and gives them a lift, assisted by Neil and Goddard, of the Cottesmore. Tom Firr is handy but in plain clothes and strictly *en amateur*. On and on by a new railway to an overflowed brook in the valley. Here the deer stops, but breaks away on the arrival of the hounds. Hounds and deer are all together in Gaston Gorse, but the deer coming out alone delivers himself over some high timber, and stops in the water again. Excited officials and amateurs wade into the water, regardless of their boots and breeches, but the Baron isn't caught yet. Up the opposite hill he canters, and the hounds pursue.

Now we arrive at another village, Wing by name, and the deer takes up his position on a heap of stones that place him nearly on a par with the top of a high wall overlooking a farm-yard, and throws up the sponge. Now to take him! The gold-laced officials approach, the

hounds being kept well away. They throw ropes at him, with very indifferent success, for some time. Finally the deer is lassoed, two officials upset, and then the hounds are introduced to the stranger who has led them such a dance. Who-whoop! the performance is over, and the visit of Her Majesty's hounds to the Shires is a thing of the past. Time, two hours; distance, as the hounds ran, quite fifteen miles, the run being in the form of a semi-circle. This being the day on which a testimonial was to be presented to the Duke of Rutland was unlucky, as the Belvoir sportsmen were unavoidably absent. Now shall we criticise the day's performance? It was a good run; the deer was unusually stout and bold; Goodaal was well with his hounds throughout. The hounds were, of course, hardly in trim to cross so severe a country—for a severe country tries hounds as well as horses—and they certainly seemed blown at times. The fences, too, puzzled them, as may well be imagined. That they were pressed upon is undubitable, yet they ere better treated in this respect than Leicestershire foxhounds usually are, and they ought to be used to being over-ridden. Had this run been with foxhounds, and ended with a kill, it would have been a very different hunting run, but the pace was certainly not equal to the pace of foxhounds in the Shires on a good scenting day. Still it was a most enjoyable outing. There were lots of falls and lots of fun, and the best thanks of the Meltonians are due to Lord Hardwicke for his spirited conduct in affording such a day's

amusement to the members of three hunts. Altogether the chase was a great success. The crowd was not overwhelming, the fixture having been kept dark, and the field, though large, was not troublesome to those who meant going after the first mile or so. Another season is over; boots and breeches must be put away, horses summered or sold, and hunting forgotten by all save Masters and huntsmen until next season.

Amongst the many interesting persons I came across was Colonel Burnaby, Grenadier Guards, cousin to the man who wrote "The Ride to Khiva." The Colonel had distinguished himself in the Crimea, and Kingslake devotes ten pages to him. He was founder of the Military Tournament. He has joined the majority years ago, but he would be surprised to find what an important function the Military Tournament has become.

Colonel Burnaby was not by any means a hard man. You rarely saw him in difficulties, and he managed to enjoy himself. He was excellent company—a thorough man of the world. One thing (which is perfectly true) he used to say: "If you want to make yourself agreeable to your company, never talk of what is interesting to yourself; but discover, if possible, the subject which is most congenial to your listener."

Lady Florence Dixie was another most remarkable individual; she used to go like "old boots"—not always, perhaps, with the soundest judgment. She was very bright and cheery. I remember one occasion when my hair came

down (that was before I learnt the secret how to look calm and collected at the end of the day). Lady Florence: "Why in the world don't you have your hair cut short like mine?"

Later on there was a terrible fuss over her ladyship's head-dress. Queen Victoria refused to allow my lady to appear at the Drawing-room without the orthodox plumes.

Another fair lady was Mrs. Sloane Stanley —and how lovely she was, with such perfect hands and seat; never in difficulties, and always in the right place.

But I must not forget our own countryman —one of whom we may all be proud. At eighty years old Mr. Wingfield Baker could sail over the Shires with the best. I remember him on a smart little brown horse without the slightest hesitation jumping as nasty a stile as you often meet with. He met his death while hunting with the Blackmoor Vale Hounds.

During one of my visits to Leicestershire I came in for the great run with the Queen's Stag Hounds, and with that I give you the accounts of several good days I enjoyed, taken from *The Field*.

1878.

Were I to go into full detail of last week's sport, I should want a quill from the wing of Pegasus, and your readers might want more than ordinary patience to wade through it, so I shall content myself with doing as the naughty boy did in the nursery rhyme, and "pick out the

plums." I must confess to considerable enjoyment out of that pretty gallop on Wednesday with the Belvoir, after a morning spent in that horse breaking country called the Heath, where every other field almost is a cover, and no one remembers the correct name of any one of them. I think, however, Stoke Wood was the place where we got on a traveller, who took us into a country little known to me, and although they did not kill their fox whilst I stopped it was a good go.

The bye-day of the Quorn on Thursday inaugurated twelve o'clock meets, which warns one how soon all will be over. Gaddesby is the trysting place, and a fit and proper place, too, for no name stands higher on the muster roll of Leicestershire sportsmen, past and present, than that of Cheney, and, notwithstanding his serious illness two years since, it is a treat to see him now put one of his favourite chestnuts at a big place as cool as a cucumber. A perfect spring morning and not much to do from Cream Gorse, where hounds were blooded on Ashby Pasture, which is too near; but after some time spent in this locality, we find ourselves ready for anything, at Thorpe Trussells—name engraven on the heart of every Leicestershire sportsman—for who has not seen many a good spin from this favoured spot? A fox is at home, but he soon moves, and is away over the road, and dips down into the valley. Oh! it was a merry ring; he ran at his best pace, hounds well on, and going as the Quorn can go; and had it been straight, where would have been the crowd?

But, luckily, the ring let us all have a cut in, and back at the cover there was a respectable muster—those who had been the whole journey showing plenty of signs of the severity of the journey—but not long to wait, for he is away again on the other side this time, and we went a journey often travelled before over hill and dale, and at last up Brough Hill, which finds out all weak points, and detects the slightest noise. But I have seen roarers get up as well as sound horses, and a little music is no new thing in Leicestershire. Pull up for a minute as you crown the hill, and your friend comes up making an awful row (I mean his steed). “Hark at the train,” says a wag close by. “Oh, I beg pardon, my dear fellow! I thought I heard an engine.” And so it was, but good enough, for all that to carry him along the top close under Pickwell, where the fences are not to be despised, and at last up to Leesthorpe, where pace died away, and the most delicious fifty minutes a man could ride to came to an end. Of course we all wanted to see the finish, than whom no one was more anxious than Captain Hartopp, who certainly wears the belt amongst welter weights, and it is a blessed marvel how he gets over a country—down, down into the valley, but slowly and with only a cold line, we hunt him on to Berry Gorse and drop at 17.

Allured by the fascination of the craft, in common with all hunting men here, I joined them at a Masonic Ball at the Town Hall, and a right jolly evening we had. It might have been a hunt ball from the number of scarlet coats

present, and it really did one good to see such steady going cards as Captain Boyce and Farley spinning round the room in the giddy waltz with all the zest they display in a good forty minutes across country. Sir Beaumont Dixie, exuberant and happy, contributed to the pleasure of the evening by bringing his lady with him, and Lord James Douglas, assisted by Lord Hastings, and one or two more of the right sort, performed a pas suel to the delight of all beholders. A more complete success than the whole affair I never saw, and it leads me to think that, after all there is something in Masonry more than we outsiders have been taught to believe ; for when such men as Lord Carington and Colonel Burnaby, and lots of others, don the apron and go in for that sort of thing it surely must be worth taking up. The hours flew by fast, as they always do when spent most happily, and I crept unwillingly to bed not long before the streaks of day appeared, dreaming of happy faces and all sorts of things, until the continued rapping at the door told me I was in fairyland, but that the sun was up and shining, and the meet at Baggrave a reality. Thank goodness, it is twelve o'clock instead of eleven, and Colonel meets us looking as fresh as a daisy, and looking as if he had been up hours, and never I should think, was there a greater run upon his liquors. His cherry brandy was voted by all to be the best ever tasted, and as ladies joined in the vote, it was carried unanimously. Add to such hospitality a capital cover with a fox in it, and you have a faint idea of



SPORTING CHEMIST taking an unpremeditated dip in the Crouch.
PAGE 35, VOL. 1.

what Baggrave is. Put some three hundred horsemen on the lawn in front, and about half a mile of carriages in the road, and the picture is complete. What a rush there was over the park, when the fox broke cover, bringing us past the Hall, and giving hounds the best chance in the world, as the field had to go right or left to get through the grounds—a chance which both fox and hounds availed themselves of, for they crossed the brook, and ran clean out of sight over the high road; but Pug knew her line, and went to ground just down the hill, and those who got first up found hounds baying round the hole he had gone in at. It was a perfectly wild scamper—horses and men wild with delight; but it let off the superfluous steam, and we settled down quietly as we moved off to John O'Gaunt's cover for next draw, before which we had a slight "divarction," as our Irish friends would say, in the shape of a hunt in a gig, which a horse took French leave with, ran away bang over the next field to where the hounds stood, gallantly charged the fence, came clear into the field, down which he shot like a rocket, and left the trap and its occupants stuck in the middle of the hedge. Not much to say of our rather dragging run for John O'Gaunt, which ended in a kill in Sutton village; nor does the after gallop from Botany Bay require much comment. A damp ride home kept us awake, and we sought our couch early. Our topic of conversation at Baggrave was the decision of the committee who has been appealed to to adjudicate respecting Mr. Tailby's country, overwhelmed, no

doubt, by the threat of Mr. Hunt, that he would not allow the Quorn to draw his extensive covers, and acting, many of them, against their consciences, they have decided to keep the country relinquished by so good a sportsman as Mr. Tailby, on the sole ground that its area is too limited, separate, and as it is, and they propose to put Sir Bache Cunard at the head of affairs, over-ruling the better judgment of such men as Captain Whitmore, and others than whom no better supporters of fox hunting are to be found. The sequel to this move will be seen in a couple of years hence, unless some change, not now foreseen, opens up more country for them. We wish the new Master every success. Mr. Tailby is a bad man to follow, as he was so thoroughly conversant and largely connected with hounds, but no doubt he will not refuse his advice, although he resigns the horn.

A FOX'S NARRATIVE.

By E.H.C.

I relate you a story, false be it or true,
You may believe it or not as best pleases you;
The reader is certainly much the best able
To judge of the story, be fact or be fable.
I will merely now give you a conversation,
Written upon my informant's own dictation.
Two foxes, he told me, on a wintry morning,
Met in November as the day was just dawning,
And after customary fox-like greeting,
And expressions of pleasure at their happy meeting,

Were heard to talk over each separate Pack,
Of Sutton and Forester, Goodall and Jack ;
The experienced fox recounted over
Many a chase from many a covert.

“ Tow’d’s the Belvoir,” he said, “ he’d the greatest
disgust,

For a fox had no chance, he was sure to be burst ;
And since he had left them and retired to the Quorn,
He had ne’er felt so safe since the day he was born.

“ With Goodall, that devil,” said he, “ when they find
me,

There’s no time to be lost as when Sutton’s behind me ;
My life well I know’s but a delicate question,
It is enough to disturb a fox’s digestion.

“ Not so with old Sutton, when I hear him chatter,
I feel well assured there is not much the matter,
For full oft for a while I have topped to survey

The start from the covert when they holloa ‘ away ! ’

“ I know there’s no hurry, for while there’s such
damning,

And the field are recklessly riding and cramming,
I’ve time to look back and view at my leisure,
My pursuers at fault with infinite pleasure.

“ What contrast there is between the field and the Pack !
The one are all ardour and the other all slack ;
There are Bromley and Forester riding like mad,
For there is nothing can stop that terrible lad.

“ When close hugging the hounds he switches a rasper,
Rides over the best dog whoop to old Jasper ;
Then Gardiner’s impatient, his patient behind,
But gently reproves him, and says he is unkind.

“ And swears there’s no scent ; what idiot supposes
The dogs from his kennel are born without noses ?
Or that his system so good should e’er be deemed slack,
With his very fine headwork in handling his Pack.

“ These Leicestershire sportsmen are born without
brains ;

He who tries to show sport is a fool for his pains,
His time is thrown away, also wasted his art—

‘ I will take my hounds home,’ says Sir Richard the
Bart.”

Somewhere about this time our maid left to be married, and my mother said we could have the housemaid to take her place. Her name was Mary Anne, up to this time, but soon after her promotion, we were staying in a house where the butler, the essence of refinement, invariably called her Mary Hann, and from that time she was always known as Mary Hann. Before she arrived at the great distinction of being acknowledged by a butler (in point of fact she had never been out of Rochford Hundred, being the daughter of what used to be termed "a good farmer's man,") an invitation came from an old friend of my mother's to stay at a smart place in Northamptonshire. We held a council of war, and came to the conclusion that there was no other course open, except to take Mary Ann.

The full horror of the situation did not dawn on us till we got into the fly at Kettering for the seven mile drive to the house where we were going, and Mary Ann was seated opposite. I recognised what was in store for us. Her face was round, red, and polished; her gown was plum colour; a round velvet hat and feather and much jewellery completed her attire; and she had a sick headache. Even after years, I always associate journeys and sick headaches with Mary Ann.

My mother, on the verge of despair, kicked me, and I responded with interest, knowing full well that every mile was bringing the dreaded moment of our arrival nearer. Well, it came at last. A groom of the chamber, the butler and three young footmen—I think the latter were

the worst—all looking down their noses as Mary Ann—she was not the least taken down—strutted into the hall, and was taken possession of by the neat lady's maid, dressed in black. She soon picked up the duties of the situation, and developed into a most devoted servant, only leaving to be married after twelve years' service. I saw her recently, and she said she had three daughters in Government offices, getting 30s. per week. No wonder Mary Ann's are now scarce, but we have been most fortunate in this respect. Quite the reverse of the experience of a lady, who was heard to say to her maid, "You are the essence of impertinence." Upon which the maid replied, "And you are the essence of lemon." There is much to be said as to the way domestics are treated. Good masters make good servants.

JOURNEY WITH A BULL-DOG.

It has been said on excellent authority that the plans of men and mice are alike doomed to failure, and so it happened to me. It was decided that I should stay at Colchester with my sister, and have a few days' hunting with the Essex and Suffolk; but a frost set in the night of my arrival and continued six weeks. Anything equal to the cold of the Colonel's quarters, in the Cavalry Barracks, where we were located, I never experienced. We dined in ulsters, hats and woollen shawls over our heads; sponges and water jugs were frozen in the bedrooms,

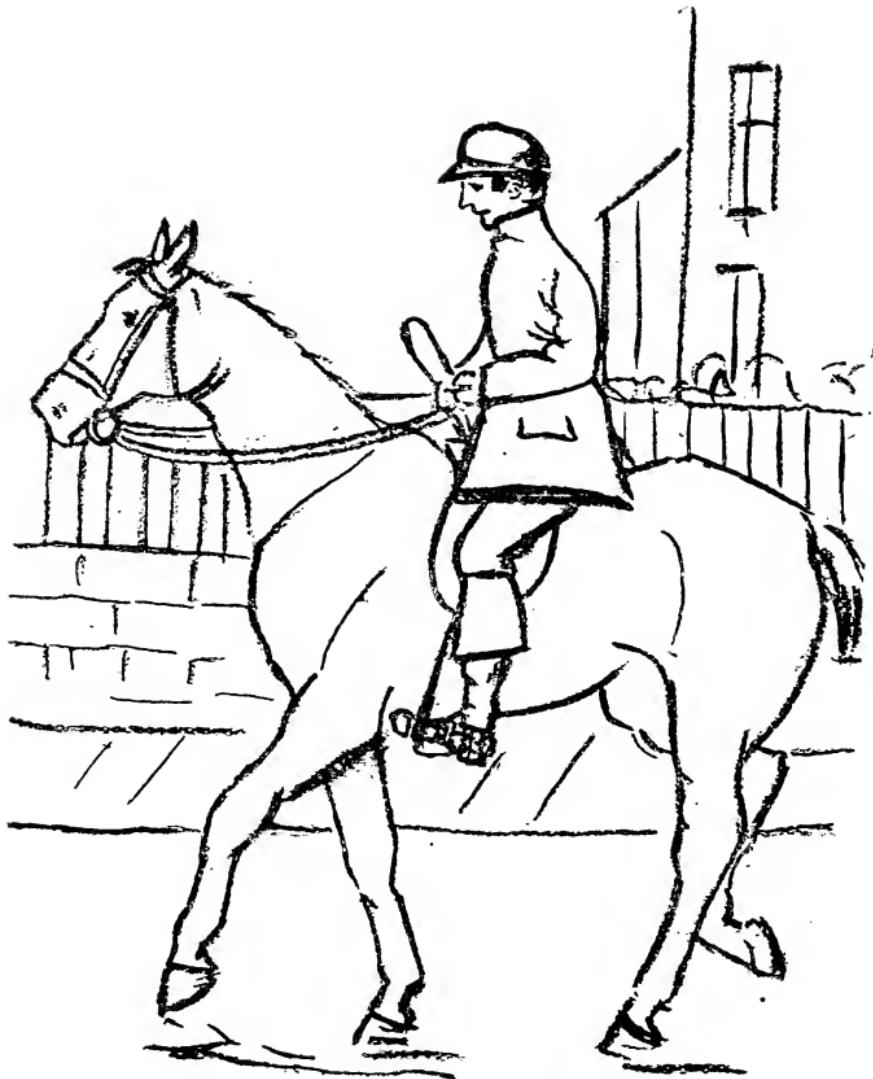
and, to add to our misery, the boiler burst. But all things, good and bad, come to an end, and so did the frost; and one steaming afternoon I set out on my return journey, accompanied by a very beautiful large white bull-dog called "Punch," a present from an officer going on foreign service.

Punch and I had a carriage to ourselves, and as we slowed up for Chelmsford I saw standing on the platform one or two men of my acquaintance, one of whom was about to enter my carriage. When he saw through the foggy window a female: "No," said he, "don't catch me travelling alone with a lady." The other replied, "I should not mind the lady, but I don't fancy the dog"; and I was left very happy with Punch as my companion. An event had only recently occurred with reference to travelling alone with a lady. The next time I met that cautious man, I had the greatest pleasure in reminding him how he had been afraid to travel with me.

Hunting days were Punch's especial horror; he used to spend the time away from his comfortable arm chair by the fire, anxiously looking out for my return, and when the happy moment did arrive he did his best to sulk and look as if he did not remember me.

A PLUNGE INTO HULL BRIDGE.

One evening we were all returning from hunting through Hull Bridge (the name is most



MR. LANCASTER'S RIDE HOME TO SOUTHEND.

misleading ; there has been no bridge since the days when Cromwell's soldiers destroyed it. There is, in fact, a portion of the old bridge to be seen in Whitbred Garden). The water was pretty deep, as it was we just managed to save the tide. One of the party—a young man living at Southend—was riding a horse quite unused to fording the river ; it started plunging, the poor young man lost control of the animal, also his seat, and at the same time dug his spurs into its side, the result being the rider was deposited in deep water. He found himself in a most awkward predicament, but managed scramble on to land. We adjourned to the Anchor, according to custom, for tea, which we were all enjoying, when a dripping spectacle appeared in the doorway. "Get out, man!" roared Charles Tabor, "you will give us all a cold." There was a complete transformation scene when he returned, clothed in white socks and slippers, a pair of the landlord's Sunday trousers reaching half-way down his legs, and a covert coat lent by one of the party ; and in that costume he rode back to Southend.

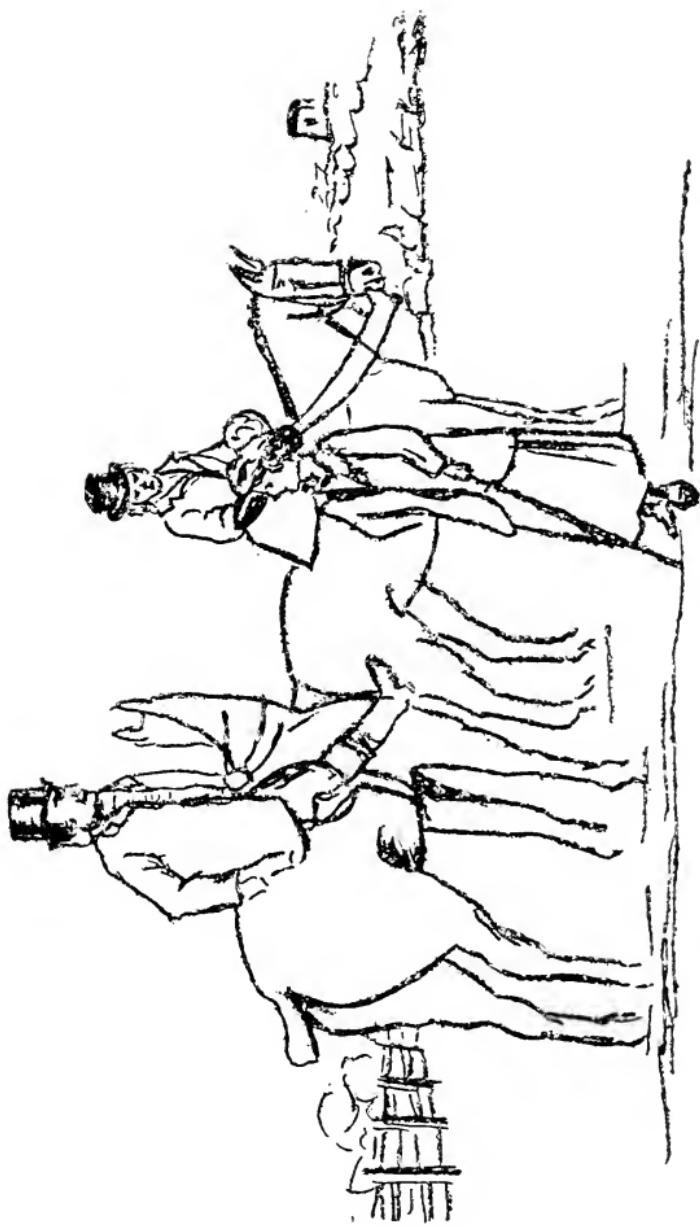
Like the P.S. in a lady's letter often contains the most important matter in the whole letter, so the short account I propose to give now ought certainly to have occupied a more prominent place, and really belongs to the first volume, but before the details (which have been sent by kind friends) reached me, the book was in the printer's hands, and I feared to worry him with fresh matter, so I must apologise to my readers for running a "heel-line," and going

back to the days of Mr. Scratton, and giving an excellent note supplied by my good friend, Mr. Coverdale, who I believe is the oldest member of the Union Hunt, and which I feel sure will be read with keen interest; and the account of the Temple Grove run ought not to be left out of this record.

Saturday, December 21st, 1861.

Galleywood (Chelmsford) Racecourse.

A large field of over 150 to meet "The Squire of Prittlewell," and the "lively ladies." Drew Moulsham Thrift and found no fox, though there was a line in it. Next, a grove by the side of the Racecourse, then Temple Grove, here one of the stoutest foxes that ever stood before hounds was at home and off in a second. Setting his head at once due south, he seemed to have a stiffness of neck that prevented his looking right or left—true as a needle to the North Pole was he to the South Pole—leaving Stock Ship on his right he "slashed" through the narrowest part of Blue Hedges, crossed an off-shoot of Pandam, and went straight to Cock Wood, apparently his point from the first; clear of it, he bent slightly to the left (the only bend in his course) appearing to mean Moor Gardens, but disdaining even that refuge he sunk the hill by Downham Church, and faced that splendid valley to the south without a covert for shelter between him and the Thames. Fifteen minutes more racing, and Crays Hill was at hand. "Yonder he goes," cried a leading horseman, and there he was, not two fields ahead, struggling gallantly on. Crossing the Wickford Road,



Sportsman to Girl from Town—I must get a piece of Red Ribbon for my horse's tail,

G.F.T.—Why Red Ribbon on his tail?

Sportsman—Because he kicks,

G.F.T.—But will that stop him?

west of the village, “the lively ladies” tickled on, a check of two or three minutes on some greasy fallows giving him a little respite. Clear of these, away they went again, Cream Gorse, a field on the left; an upraised hat in the clear distance told his course; but his “merciless pursuers” needed not that signal. On, on they raced till Bowers Giffard was reached. Into the road he turned, too beat to leave it; running from scent to view, the darling ladies rolled him over within one yard of Bowers churchyard. Ten miles from point to point, fourteen as they ran, one hour twenty-six minutes.

To the astonishment of a well satisfied field (some nags were more than satisfied) the “insatiable” Squire said he would draw again, and he did too. Found instantly in Nevendon Bushes, came away due east, and ran a “burster,” about six only with the hounds, nearly to Bowers Church, into the marshes, and up to Vange Creek; but the tide being in and water very salt, could make nothing of our fox, and gave it up very willingly. Twenty-five minutes, a “tickler.”

Mr. Scratton was succeeded by Mr. John Offin, the half brother of Mr. Tom Offin, to whom I owe the accounts of so many of the runs in which he took such an honourable position, and which appear in the first volume. He lived at Hutton Hall and kept the hounds from 1869 till Captain White took them in 1873. Bentley was his huntsman and Joe Bailey first whip. I was away at school most of the time,

and I therefore rely on the note supplied by friends.

THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT.

The following account of a very important event in the history of the Essex Union Hunt, and which ought not to be omitted, has been sent to me by Mr. Fred Wood, and I give it in his own words.

Mr. John Offin had the honour of "blooding" his Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, who was then Prince Arthur, and who was quartered at Woolwich. He kept four cobs at the Essex Arms, Brentwood.

The Meet was at the Dog and Partridge, Stifford. A fox was found in Fourteen Acres, and there was a good hunting run of about forty-five minutes, terminating in a kill near Warley Barracks. While the fox was being broken up, His Royal Highness asked Mr. Offin to blood him, as he had been informed it was the custom to do so, this being the first fox he had seen killed. Mr. Offin at first demurred, asking to be excused, but His Royal Highness would take no denial. Consequently the ancient ceremony was duly performed. Prince Arthur then left, and went to Brentwood Station, caught the first train to London, and went straight home with his face smeared with blood.

Mr. Wood goes on to say:—His Royal Highness was most affable and agreeable to all, and not above speaking to any one. He was a

bold and fearless rider. On one occasion I, knowing the country well, cautioned him about the fence we were coming to. "I will take my chance," was his reply. I know it is quite true what Mr. Wood says of the Duke's kindness of manner. He was for some time at Dover, and constantly with some connections of mine whose father commanded the 17th Lancers, and later on his son also was Colonel of that Regiment. Both father and son were named Dosey—the name sticks to the son to this day; but, to return to the Duke—I am always getting off the line, and running riot, and many a raking should I have got if I had been a fox hound—His Royal Highness spent a good deal of time with this family, but great was their astonishment when the girls, terribly nervous of course, were going through the ordeal of a first drawing room, he stepped out of the circle of royalties surrounding the Queen and shook hands with them. On one occasion when hunting he cantered up to my brother, and with the greatest delight said, "Why, Tawke, you are on fire"—and, true enough, a box of matches had caught fire in my unfortunate brother's breeches pocket, and they were slowly burning off.

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My next series will cover the three years enjoyed under the Mastership of Captain Kemble.

